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A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM 1815

VOL. II.

A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE

CONCLUSION OF THE GREAT WAR IN 1815

BY

SPENCER WALPOLE

AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL'

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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Errata.

Page 229, line 31, *for* 1798 *read* 1793
„ 329 „ 16 „ Sultans „ ten Sultans

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER VII

CHAP. VII.

1820.

Effects of the Peace.

THE five concluding years of the reign of George III. form the most miserable epoch in modern English history. The war was over; the feverish excitement which the contest had created was succeeded by a dull torpor. The public was no longer sustained by the news of successive victories; and it was no longer in ignorance of the cost at which those victories had been secured. The most appreciable relique of the war was the huge debt which it had placed upon the shoulders of the nation. During the continuance of the struggle peace had been desired as the era of lighter financial burdens. Peace came; and most of the taxation under which the nation had been labouring was continued. The burden was the more intolerable from the circumstance that every class of society was experiencing unforeseen embarrassments. The farmer suddenly discovered that the conclusion of the war had reduced the demand for agricultural produce. The manufacturer unexpectedly learned that the ruin of his foreign customers was destroying the market for his products. The shipowner found that the return of peace was terminating the monopoly in the carrying trade of the world which war had given to him. The embarrassments to which these classes were suddenly exposed reacted on every grade of society. The landlord had to submit to lower rents, the capitalist to lower interest, the

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labourer to lower wages. With the landlord and the capitalist hard times implied embarrassment, with the labourer they pointed to the workhouse or starvation. Starving men were naturally inclined to probe the causes of their misery. Hundreds of self-constituted advisers were ready to ascribe it to the state of politics. Political agitators found a ready audience amidst a suffering population, and were easily able to persuade men without employment to demand reforms which they were assured would promote their welfare. Reform was to be obtained by the organisation of the masses; and the ruling classes were to be taught the impossibility of resistance. It is one thing, however, to create a flood; it is another to control it. It is one thing to collect a mob; it is another to secure its peaceable dispersion. A few disorderly spirits readily provoke a riot, and the example of desperate men quickly influences their more orderly companions. It was almost inevitable that disturbances should arise from the organisation of the lower orders after the conclusion of the Great War. Unfortunately, the Government, instead of removing the cause to which the disturbances were attributable, decided on stamping out disorder. To quote the epigrammatic language of a poet, who was seldom epigrammatical, 'in Britain ruled a panic dread of change.' Animated by this sentiment, the ruling classes thought it the first duty of Government to preserve at any cost existing institutions, or, as they would themselves have said, the glorious Constitution. For the sake of preserving what they were pleased to term the Constitution, they set themselves deliberately to destroy the freedom which the Constitution had previously afforded. From time immemorial the people had enjoyed the right of public meeting; the right of public meeting, for the first time, was curtailed. From time immemorial everyone had enjoyed the right to publish his own opinions on his own responsibility. Security, for

the first time, was demanded of every publisher. From time immemorial every person accused of any offence had been entitled to a trial. The conclusion of the Great War was followed by the arbitrary and unnecessary suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

The death of George III.

The five concluding years of the reign of George III. thus form a period of gloom. On the 29th of January, 1820, George III. died. Parliament, at the time, stood prorogued till the 18th of February; but the law required that it should reassemble immediately on the demise of the crown.[1] The 29th of January was a Saturday, and, in obedience to this law, Parliament assembled on the Sunday. The next few days were occupied with swearing in members, and both Houses then formally adjourned to the 17th of February. On the 17th Lord Liverpool, in the House of Lords, and Lord Castlereagh, in the House of Commons, presented a formal message from the new king. The king announced his father's death, and his intention to dissolve the Parliament without delay. The announcement of the dissolution could not have been unexpected by the Opposition. Brougham had, some days before, issued his address to the electors of Westmoreland; and the preparations for the general election had, therefore, already begun. The law, in fact, required that the dissolution should take place within six months of the demise of the crown. The question, therefore, for consideration was not whether Parliament should be dissolved at all, but whether it should be dissolved in March or in July. It was difficult to conceive that much importance could be attached to the decision of this question; but a section of the Opposition were violently opposed to the determination

[1] The law was regulated by 7 and 8 Wm. III., c. 15, and 6 Anne, c. 7. A later statute (37 George III., c. 127) provided for the contingency of the demise of the crown between the dissolution of one Parliament and the assembly of a new one.

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of the Government. On four previous occasions—on the accession of Anne, of George I., of George II., and of George III.—Parliament had at once addressed itself to the consideration of the Civil List; and the same course, it was argued, ought to be followed again. It was urged, moreover, that after the demise of the crown the country expected some declaration of policy from the new sovereign, and that there was reason for complaining that no such explanation had been given by the monarch. These and other arguments, however, did not carry much weight among the majority of either House of Parliament. A motion, approving the intended dissolution, was agreed to; provisional arrangements were concluded for the extension of the Mutiny Act to the 24th of June; the House of Commons voted certain sums of money for the purposes of Government; and then, having disposed of these matters, Parliament was prorogued on the 28th of February, and dissolved a fortnight afterwards—on the 13th of March.[1]

The dissolution and general election of 1820.

The general election of 1820 was not remarkable for any ebullition of popular feeling. Comparatively few changes were made in the representation, and the strength of parties was only slightly varied. On the 21st of April the new Parliament assembled; on the 27th it was formally opened by the king. George IV. regretted, in his speech, that the state of the country did not permit him to dispense with the additional military force which he had been compelled to ask for during the previous session; he directed the attention of the House of Commons to the provision to be made for the support of the Civil Government;[2] he expressed his satisfaction at the promptitude with which the machinations and designs of the disaffected had been suppressed by the activity and vigilance of the magistrates; and he anxiously looked

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xli. pp. 1642, 1643. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 15–28.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. p. 12. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 40.

forward to the mitigation of the distress which still prevailed among the labouring classes. The king's speech did not provoke any immediate opposition. Addresses, re-echoing his Majesty's sentiments, were voted unanimously, and both parties reserved themselves for a conflict on a more definite issue. The Opposition had, in fact, been checkmated by the prudence of the Ministry. The new king had characteristically desired to make a good thing out of his accession to the throne; but the Ministry had wisely and steadily refused to make any addition to the Civil List. The arrangement was a much better bargain for the public than some of the Opposition had anticipated, and the bargain had been only obtained 'by the most determined refusal of ministers to do more.'[1] The Ministry's determination was the more commendable, because the king had actually threatened to punish their obstinacy with dismissal. 'He has been pretty well disposed,' wrote Lord Eldon, 'to part with us all, because we would not make additions to his revenue. This we thought conscientiously we could not do in the present state of the country and of the distresses of the middle and of the lower orders.'[2]

The Civil List.

The Civil List, which thus became a subject of dispute between the king and his ministers, was of comparatively recent origin. Until the concluding years of the seventeenth century all the revenues of the country were bestowed on the king; the king was responsible for the entire cost of Government; the taxes which were voted to him were never appropriated to any particular purpose; and the expenditure which he incurred was never subjected to any audit. As, however, the hereditary revenues of the crown proved insufficient for all the purposes of Government, the House of Commons was, from time to time, compelled to supplement them with extra grants. Before the Revolution of 1688 these grants were

[1] Buckingham's *Memrs. of Geo. IV.*, vol. i. p. 18. [2] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 363.

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usually made unconditionally to the king. After the Revolution they were appropriated to express purposes. The king was thus gradually relieved of certain charges which had previously been thrown on the crown, and the nation took upon its own shoulders the cost of the military and naval services, and the burden of the national debt. The full effects of the change were hardly seen at the time at which it was made. On the accession of Anne, however, the hereditary revenues of the crown were obviously insufficient to provide for all the costs of Government. A Civil List Act was passed; and the hereditary revenues, and certain other taxes, voted to her Majesty for life, were settled on the queen 'for the expenses of the Civil Government' alone. A similar course was pursued with the two succeeding sovereigns. The hereditary revenues, and certain other taxes, were settled upon them for the support of the household and the expenses of the Civil Government. But on the accession of George III. a different and better arrangement was made for the first time. A long experience had proved that the crown was incapable of managing its revenues, either to its own advantage or to that of the public; and it was decided, therefore, that they should be paid into the aggregate or Consolidated Fund, and that a fixed sum of 800,000*l.* a year should be issued to the king for the support of his household and the expenses of the Civil Government. Unfortunately this sum proved inadequate for the purpose for which it was voted. During the long reign of George III. Parliament was required from time to time to pay debts, incurred by the crown, amounting in the aggregate to about 3,400,000*l.* During the same period it was compelled to augment the Civil List till it ultimately reached 1,083,727*l.*, and to relieve it from various charges which had been previously thrown upon it.

Some grumbling was not unnaturally provoked by

the constant applications of the crown for money; and the discontent received a very remarkable answer. It was argued that George III. on his accession had made a very bad bargain with the public; and that the hereditary revenues, if he had only adhered to them, would have enabled him to have provided for all his wants, without the intervention of the Legislature. The impression made by this argument was increased by the figures of a return presented to Parliament soon after the accession of her present Majesty. It was shown in that return that the hereditary and temporary revenues enjoyed by George II., and surrendered by George III., amounted during the reign of the latter to rather more than 75,000,000*l.* It was known that the gross amount of all the payments to the crown during the same reign was rather less than 57,000,000*l.* Even if allowance were made for the 3,400,000*l.* of debts incurred by George III., the public was still apparently the richer from the bargain by more than 14,600,000*l.* Stated even in this way the figures were not strictly accurate. They took no account of the charges of which the Civil List had been relieved during the reign; and the aggregate relief thus afforded was computed in 1815 to have exceeded 9,500,000*l.*, and in 1820 must have reached 10,000,000*l.* At the very outside, then, the so-called bargain could not have cost the crown more than 4,600,000*l.* But even this loss to the crown and this gain to the public could only be made out by ignoring the plainest facts and venturing on the boldest assumptions. It was assumed, as a matter of course, that the Legislature would have been prepared to grant to George III. the temporary revenues, to which the crown had no claim, but which George II. had enjoyed. There was no reason for supposing that the Legislature would have done anything of the kind; it would have certainly been guilty of unpardonable extravagance if it had done so; yet the whole calculation of

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the loss to the crown and of the gain to the public depended on this assumption. If, however, the assumption on which the calculation was constructed were faulty, the facts which it ignored were equally fatal to it. The hereditary revenues, which were regarded as the absolute property of the sovereign, were really only held in trust by the sovereign for the benefit of the public. When they were originally granted they were charged with the whole cost of Government; and nothing but the actual intervention of the Legislature at the commencement of each reign limited their application to the purposes of the Civil List. Those, then, who declare that the public have largely gained by the disinterested conduct of George III. and of his successors, are either ignorant of the plain facts of the case or purposely ignore them. The Queen would speedily be ruined if she were to resume the enjoyment of the hereditary revenues at the cost of discharging the duties for which they were originally granted to the crown.[1]

Its amount.

The Civil List had been fixed in 1816 at 1,083,727*l.*, but this sum had been diminished, in 1819, after Queen Charlotte's death, to 975,727*l.* George III.'s death naturally made some further savings possible. The expense of the Windsor establishment, and of the privy purse of the late king, had amounted to 130,000*l.*; and without these charges the Civil List only required a sum of 845,727*l.* The figures were rounded off for the sake of appearances, and a sum of 850,000*l.* a year was voted for the Civil List. The crown now enjoys a Civil List of only 385,000*l.*; but it must not consequently be supposed that her Majesty receives 465,000*l.* less than her uncle, George IV. In the time of George IV. the entire cost of foreign embassies and

[1] Returns of Public Inc. and Exp., part ii. pp. 593–600. Cf. Sir E. May's *Constitutional History*, vol. i. pp. 198–215. The Return referred to in the text is Parl. Paper, No. 3, Sess. 1837.

consulships was thrown on the Civil List; pensions amounting to 95,000*l.* a year, and the salaries of the Chancellor, of the Judges, of the Speaker of the House of Commons, of the Lords of the Treasury, and of other great officers were also charged upon it. These various charges, from which the Civil List has since been relieved, absorbed about 410,000*l.* a year. Without them the Civil List of George IV. did not exceed 440,000*l.* annually. But 440,000*l.* a year represented only a portion of the income which was placed at the absolute disposal of George IV. The Irish Civil List amounted to 207,000*l.* a year;[1] the hereditary revenues of Scotland yielded 109,000*l.* annually. The crown, however, derived no pecuniary interest from these sources. The charges on the Irish Civil List for the civil government of Ireland amounted to 145,000*l.* a year, and the balance was more than absorbed by the pensions which had been lavishly granted out of it.[2] The Scotch Civil List was in a similar condition. The receipts were notoriously insufficient to defray all the charges of civil government in Scotland.[3] In addition, however, to the Civil Lists of Scotland and Ireland, the crown enjoyed other revenues, which by a singular anomaly had never been surrendered to the public. It still retained in its own hands the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster; the heir-apparent was still allowed to enjoy the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall. The crown, moreover, still retained uncontrolled authority over the droits of the crown, the droits of the Admiralty, and the 4½ per cent. West India duties. The droits of the crown consisted of royal fish, of wreckage, of jetsam, flotsam, and ligan; of the royalty of mines, of treasure trove, of waifs and strays, of forfeitures, of deodands, of

Additional sources of revenue enjoyed by the crown.

[1] Return of Public Inc. and Exp., part ii. p. 603.

[2] The charges on the Irish Civil List will be found in Parl. Ret. of Inc. and Exp., part ii. p. 401; the pensions in ibid., p. 616.

[3] Ibid., p. 36.

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escheats of lands in default of heirs.[1] The droits of the Admiralty consisted of ships belonging to an enemy captured in war. The 4½ per cent. West India duty was a customs duty on the produce of the island, originally granted in 1663 by the Assembly of Barbados, 'in consideration of the great charges that there must be of necessity in maintaining the honour and dignity of his Majesty's authority here.'[2] The crown soon applied to its own uses a revenue which had originally been granted to it for colonial purposes; and a sum of money wrung from the colony for local objects was recklessly wasted on pensions lavished on the favourites of the Court and the supporters of the Ministry.[3]

Brougham's attack on the Civil List.

The various casual revenues, the principal of which have been thus enumerated, yielded in the aggregate about 12,700,000*l.* during the long reign of George III. The crown had, on an average, received more than 200,000*l.* a year from these sources, and Parliament had had no sort of control over the receipts. The droits of the Admiralty alone had yielded no less than 9,500,000*l.* during the period, the supremacy of Britain at sea having enabled her cruisers to sweep the enemy's traders into British ports. The crown, however, it is only just to add, had not been able to appropriate the whole of this amount to its own use. Nearly 5,400,000*l.* had been devoted to rewarding the captors of the prizes; 2,600,000*l.* had been applied to the public service. But the residue,

[1] Royal fish comprised whale and sturgeon, thrown ashore or caught near the coasts. Wreckage, goods lost at sea and thrown on shore. Flotsam were goods floating on the water; jetsam, goods sunk under the water; ligan, goods tied to a cork or buoy and unclaimed by any owner. Waifs were *bona waviata*, or goods stolen and thrown away by the thief in his flight. Strays were valuable animals found wandering without an owner. Deodands comprised any chattel which had been the immediate occasion of the death of any reasonable creature, and which was, *deo dandum*, forfeited to the king for pious purposes.

[2] Return Public Inc. & Exp., p. 463.

[3] Sir E. May, in his *Constitutional History*, seems to imagine that the 4½ per cent. duties were distinct from the West India duties (vol. i. p. 205). It seemed, therefore, desirable to give a somewhat accurate account of the origin of these duties.

or 4,700,000*l.*, had been devoted to defraying the debts of the Civil List, and to the increase of the king's private income. The crown had enjoyed, on an average, some 80,000*l.* a year from this source.

Brougham perceived the objectionable nature of this arrangement more clearly than any of his contemporaries; and Brougham seized the opportunity which the commencement of a new reign afforded him for attempting to terminate it. He proposed to relieve the Civil List of the salaries of the judges, of the Speaker, of the foreign ministers, and of other unsuitable charges; to pay all the casual revenues of the crown into the Consolidated Fund; and to grant the crown, in place of them, an adequate provision for maintaining its dignity. He was met by Canning with arguments which might have been employed by a Tory minister in the days of George II. 'The honourable member,' said Canning, 'wishes that the regal department of the State may be recast anew, and every vestige of ancient feudal monarchy removed. . . . He has expatiated on the danger of leaving the crown in possession of a power of conferring pensions charged on funds not within the control of Parliament. For my own part, I think it better that the crown should reward public services by property under its own peculiar protection than that a democratic assembly should dole out largesses and favours according to the impulse of passion, party, or canvass.' The vigorous eloquence of Canning obtained an easy victory over the arguments of Brougham. The Ministerial party voted compactly in favour of the prerogative of the crown, and Brougham's amendment was rejected by 273 votes to 155.[1] The Ministerial majority was swelled by the circumstance that many members who admitted the force of Brougham's reasoning doubted the policy of adopting his resolution at that time.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 133, 163. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 94–99.

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In the first place, the king, as regent, had been in enjoyment of the casual revenues for some years, and it seemed unjust to deprive him of them because his father's death had necessitated a change in his title. In the next place, the droits of the Admiralty of recent years had been increased by the war; and, if this opportunity were taken for surrendering them, the crown would probably be able to make an exceptionally good bargain for itself, and an exceptionally bad one for the public.[1] These reasons might have fairly influenced the votes of any member. Instead of adopting them Canning rested his case on grounds which would hardly have been tenable a hundred years before. How shortsighted are the views of the wisest statesmen! Within eleven years from the date of Canning's speech another sovereign ascended the throne of England; and the Ministry of 1831 recommended Parliament to adopt the very course which Canning had wasted his eloquence in resisting eleven years before.

Universal distress of all classes.

Brougham's motion, however, had been heartily supported by a section of the Opposition; and the circumstances of the country had given strong emphasis to his demand for economy. The year 1819 had been marked by continuous distress. The official value of the imports had decreased from 35,845,340*l.* to 29,681,640*l.*; the declared value of the exports of British produce had decreased from 45,180,150*l.* to 34,252,251*l.*[2] This extraordinary diminution in the trade of the country had necessarily made a marked impression on all classes of the community. Capitalists could find no employment for their money; workmen could find no employers for their labour; and landlords, groaning under exceptional taxation, could find no tenants for their land. The revenue of the country was naturally affected by the universal depression of industry. The Finance Committee of

[1] See Thomas Grenville's opinion, in Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 18.
[2] McCulloch's *Com. Dict.*, *ad verb.* 'Imports and Exports.'

1819 had estimated the revenue of the year at 54,000,000*l.* Additional taxation, which had produced 500,000*l.*, had been imposed since the committee's report. But, notwithstanding this resource, the actual revenue had only amounted to 53,000,000*l.*;[1] and the Consolidated Fund had proved unequal to the discharge of the liabilities upon it. Under these circumstances the duties of a finance minister were not pleasant. He had to provide for the expenditure of the country out of a failing revenue. The task, moreover, which was thrown on Vansittart had been made more difficult by the events which had recently occurred. The remembrance of the Peterloo Massacre was still fresh in men's minds; the 'battle' of Bonnymuir—for men persisted in describing the trumpery conflict as a battle—was the latest incident in the military history of England; the horrible details of the Cato Street conspiracy had just been revealed at the trial of the conspirators. The plots of a few obscure Radicals may have formed no solid basis for apprehension; but the vast majority of the upper classes were seriously alarmed. The Ministry, participating in these fears, insisted on increasing the military force. They were so confident of the popularity of their decision that they almost declined to justify its expediency. 'The reasons for this increase of force are so notorious,' they argued, 'that any attempt to prove the necessity was 'a waste of time' and a trifling with the public understanding.

The Budget.

The decision of the Ministry, however, seriously increased the difficulties of Vansittart. The army estimates were raised from 8,782,470*l.* to 9,422,000*l.*; the navy

[1] These figures are from Vansittart's Budget speech (*Hansard's Debates*, New Series, vol. i. p. 1166). They evidently refer to the permanent revenue of the State, and do not include the annual duties and the temporary excise, which produced about 5,000,000*l.* The gross income of the financial year 1818–19 amounted to 59,509,408*l.*; that of the financial year 1819–20 to 58,073,314*l.* There was, therefore, a falling off, notwithstanding the increased taxation, of 1,436,000*l.* (See Returns of Public Inc. and Exp., part ii. pp. 42, 44.)

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estimates, from 6,436,781*l.* to 6,586,700*l.*; the ordnance estimates, from 1,191,000*l.* to 1,204,600*l.*; and the miscellaneous estimates, from 2,078,197*l.* to 2,100,000*l.* The supply services, in short, as they would now be called, required 19,313,300*l.*, instead of 18,488,448*l.* Fortunately for Vansittart, the charge of the unfunded debt had decreased. In 1818 and 1819 the interest and sinking fund upon it had amounted to 2,000,000*l.* The same charges were placed in 1820 at 1,410,000*l.* The whole supply, therefore, which it was necessary for Parliament to provide amounted to 20,723,000*l.*; and towards this supply there was an available revenue of exactly 6,000,000*l.*[1] There was, in other words, an apparent deficit of 14,723,000*l.* The deficiency, however, was merely nominal. The Sinking Fund, which was still faithfully maintained by the minister, now amounted to rather more than 17,000,000*l.* The termination of the Sinking Fund would have at once converted a deficit into a surplus. But the Ministry had not yet learned the simple lesson that a change of creditors is not synonymous with a reduction of debt. The farce of paying off debt with one hand and incurring fresh debt with the other was still religiously performed. But the operation was at length becoming so ludicrous that its real nature was gradually appearing to everyone. In 1820 Vansittart hardly attempted to conceal the expedient which he adopted. Four-fifths of the whole deficiency — or 12,000,000*l.*—was raised by a loan from the Sinking Fund Commissioners, and the residue only was borrowed in the open market. Vansittart himself seems to have perceived the obvious inconsistency of this course. He

[1]

	£
Annual malt duty	3,000,000
Temporary Excise	2,500,000
Lottery	240,000
Naval stores, Sale of	260,000
Total	£6,000,000

thought it necessary to make an elaborate apology for borrowing in the open market, instead of taking the whole sum which he required from the Sinking Fund Commissioners. The purchases of the Sinking Fund Commissioners, he explained, had the effect of maintaining the value of stock; and he was not prepared to risk the fall in its price which might possibly result from their cessation. It does not seem to have occurred to this wise financier that a fresh loan must have made the same impression on the money market in one direction as the purchase of an equal amount of stock would have made in another. But Vansittart's inconsistencies did not stop at this point. He had still to provide for the interest of the new debt which he was most unnecessarily creating. The debt which the Sinking Fund Commissioners held on paper had accumulated to 144,000,000*l.*, and Vansittart at one stroke of the pen reduced it to 100,000,000*l.* The Sinking Fund Commissioners were deprived of the interest on 44,000,000*l.* of stock, and the amount which was thus saved became, of course, available for the charge of the new debt which Vansittart created.[1]

Suspension of political conflict during the queen's trial.

The scheme, of course, provoked much criticism. But men's minds were too full of other matters to dwell with any persistency on the inconsistencies of Vansittart's finance. The Budget had been proposed on the 19th of June, and on that very evening Lord Castlereagh had announced to the House of Commons the utter failure of the informal conference between the commissioners of the king and the queen. Men of all shades of opinion were occupied in discussing what had passed, and in conjecturing what would follow, and Vansittart's financial statement was consequently addressed to an inattentive and uncritical audience. Nor was it possible at any later period of the session to awaken much interest in Parliament in any subject except one. The profound impres-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. i. pp. 1161–1179.

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sion which the proceedings against the queen created made every other subject appear trivial and inopportune. The Ministry, which was responsible for these proceedings, undoubtedly derived one advantage from the unpopularity with which their concession to the king was regarded. In Parliament all real opposition was suspended. It was obvious that the offensive task which the Ministry had set itself had to be discharged; and no public man outside the Cabinet would have taken office at the cost of completing it. It was everywhere evident that, for good or for evil, the Liverpool Administration must remain in power until the queen's business had been finally settled. Outside the walls of Parliament, moreover, the queen's trial had a somewhat similar effect. The demand for Radical reform ceased, because men forgot to agitate for reform in their desire to agitate for the queen. From June to November the attention of the Legislature and of the country was fixed on one all-absorbing topic, and almost every other subject was either passed over in silence or forgotten.

Passions created by the queen's trial.

For more than six months, then, men almost entirely occupied themselves with the concerns of the queen. They forgot their own afflictions in the presence of her grievances. The queen's trial became the engrossing topic of the day, and party politics lost their interest. The attention of the public was in this way for a time diverted from the schemes of the Radicals and the designs of the disaffected; and the country, instead of agitating for reform, was contented with enthusiastically supporting the queen. The passions, however, which the queen's trial had excited were at least as strong as those which in previous years had encouraged Hunt, Watson, Thistlewood, and others to agitate for political reform or for the violent subversion of the Government. The Acts which the Ministry had introduced for the express purpose of curbing the license of the press proved wholly ineffec-

tive; and 'newspapers, placards, pamphlets, and caricatures of the most filthy and odious description were exposed for sale in every street, alley, and lane of the metropolis.'[1] The printers of these broadsheets were, indeed, able to plead the example of their opponents as a partial excuse for their own conduct. Late in November 1820, when the proceedings against the queen had terminated, a Sunday newspaper suddenly appeared, and almost immediately obtained a very large circulation. It was called by its projectors the 'John Bull'; its declared object was to attack the queen; and it carried on the attack with extraordinary but unscrupulous ability. Unscrupulous ability was, indeed, to be expected from the 'John Bull.' Its principal conductor, Theodore Hook, was distinguished, among a generation of good talkers, for his wit; and the powers which won him admission to the best society in London secured a speedy popularity for the new paper.

The 'John Bull' and Theodore Hook.

Theodore Hook was the son of a musical composer; he was educated at Harrow; but the ordinary studies of a public school were ill adapted for his peculiar genius. At a very early age he wrote a comic opera, 'The Soldier's Return,' which was received with favour. The success of this attempt influenced the youthful author's career. He frequented the 'green-room,' where his brilliant wit ensured him a ready welcome. Rumours of his extraordinary genius were soon heard in more exalted society. The Regent threw open the doors of Carlton House to Theodore Hook, and laughed at his impromptu verses and witty epigrams. The favour of the prince obtained for his brilliant guest a valuable appointment in the Mauritius. Hook became Accountant-General and Treasurer of the colony. He seems to have passed his colonial life eating good dinners and singing good songs. The duties of his office were pro-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 60.

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bably, in his eyes, the very last matters which required his attention. His neglect resulted in serious consequences. A defalcation of 12,000*l.*—it was at first thought of 20,000*l.*—was discovered in his accounts, and Hook was arrested and brought back to England. Something, as he himself put it, was 'wrong in the chest,' and Hook, in consequence, with scanty means and with the most extravagant tastes, found himself in London.

Such had been the history of the man who became the principal conductor of the new paper, whose special mission was to denounce the queen. Half-measures were not in favour with its editor, and, under Hook's conduct, the war was at once carried into the enemy's camp. 'John Bull' commenced its career by publishing those contents of the 'green bag,' which the Ministry themselves had hitherto kept private.[1] It attacked without mercy every lady who visited the queen; and it did not hesitate to make gross imputations upon the characters of some of them.[2] The supporters of the Regent were delighted to avail themselves of the services of an ally who carried on the battle with weapons which their opponents had previously monopolised, and with an ability which their opponents could not command. The Radicals, encouraged by the example of a paper which was admitted to every fashionable breakfast-table, scattered in their turn new periodicals broadcast through the metropolis. The conductors of these periodicals had no more scruples than Theodore Hook; but they had neither the wit nor the ability which were the redeeming features of 'John Bull.' The upper classes were shocked at the utter disregard of decency which these publications displayed, and decided on taking some steps to prevent their dissemination among the lower orders. A considerable number of persons formed themselves into an asso-

[1] Denman, vol. i. p. 183. [2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 50.

1820.

The Constitutional Association.

ciation 'for supporting the laws for suppressing seditious publications, and for defending the country from the fatal influence of disloyalty and sedition.'[1] The association numbered among its members Tory peers, Tory bishops, Tory statesmen, Tory clergy: men whose Tory principles had already received their reward in this world; men who hoped for a reward for their fidelity to the same cause. The society called itself the Constitutional Association: it was known to its opponents as the 'Bridge Street Gang.' Its first efforts were useful. It drew up an exposition of the English law of libel, which it distributed gratuitously among the chief dealers in the offensive literature of the time; and it persuaded many of these men to desist from a trade which undoubtedly subjected them to the penalties of the law.

If the association had contented itself with merely explaining the law, no exception would have been taken to its proceedings. Unfortunately, however, the society selected some of the publications, which it considered the most libellous, for prosecution; and it commenced proceedings against their authors, their publishers, or their vendors. The public, however, who had willingly supported the association, were hardly prepared for this course. They were quite ready to check the spread of indecent publications by persuasive measures, but they were not prepared to arm a wealthy society with power to proceed against obscure authors and printers. It was one thing to desire that the printing press should be pure; it was another to subject needy scribblers to the pains and penalties of a criminal prosecution. Even decency could be purchased at too high a price; and the liberty of the press was an object of more importance than public morals. The association, moreover, had obtained so many subscribers that its exertions were crippled by its success. It was hardly possible

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 60.

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to impanel a jury without including some member of the Bridge Street Gang in the panel. The judges, in consequence, made a new rule to meet the exceptional nature of the case, and in every prosecution instituted by the society compelled every juryman to state on oath whether he were a member of the association or not.[1] Before the end of 1821, moreover, an indictment was laid by 'the Gang' against a man named Dolby; and the sheriff by whom the jury was returned was proved to have been a member of the association.[2] Cases of this character convinced even the subscribers to the society that organisations of the nature of the Bridge Street Gang were objectionable. A series of debates in the House of Commons confirmed these suspicions. The results which the association had already attained were but small. 'After a year and a half's work,' wrote the 'Edinburgh Review,' 'they have convicted a fustian-cutter at Manchester of selling an address to the Reformers: one wretched old man of seventy, whom they were fain to allow to plead guilty upon an engagement never to bring him up to judgment; and a lad or two whom they detected selling in a shop things the nature of which they were incapable of understanding.'[3] Small, however, as the results of the association had been, its activity perceptibly declined when it was found that the policy of its prosecutions was open to question. The attacks of the Opposition upon it became more and more warm; its defence by the Government became more and more cool. The chilling support of its friends was probably more fatal to the society than the hot onslaught of its opponents. The Bridge Street Gang gradually restricted its operations, and expired without notice and without regret.

The Bridge Street Gang would, under any circum-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 62. [2] Ibid., Chron., p. 482.
[3] *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxxvii. p. 115.

stances, have fallen when its real nature was explained to its supporters. But there was another reason for its gradual cessation. The scurrilous publications which had originally influenced its well-meaning subscribers owed their origin to the universal excitement which the proceedings against the queen had fomented. With the termination of these proceedings the temper of the public became comparatively calm; and the language of the writers who had inflamed the passions of the multitude became proportionately cool. Happily, too, there was another cause for better feeling. During the early part of 1820 the manufactures of the kingdom remained in a condition of continuous depression. But, as the year wore on, the appearances of trade became slightly more hopeful. The king, in the beginning of 1821, was able to assure the Parliament that 'a considerable improvement has taken place within the last half-year in several of the most important branches of our commerce and manufactures;' and that 'in many of the manufacturing districts the distresses which prevailed at the commencement of the last session of Parliament have greatly abated.' Happily, moreover, the king's satisfaction was justified by the facts of the case. The trade of the country had increased. The official value of the imports had risen from 29,681,460*l.* in 1819 to 31,515,222*l.* in 1820; the declared value of the exports from 34,252,251*l.* to 35,569,077*l.* The improvement was slight; but the slightest improvement was acceptable. In 1821, moreover, the gradual return of better times became more and more perceptible. The demand for labour increased; the labouring classes succeeded in obtaining better wages; and the burden on the ratepayers was alleviated. At the end of 1820 the weekly pay of the outdoor poor in Birmingham amounted to 614*l.*; in December 1821 it had been reduced to 374*l.* The roll of paupers in receipt of relief had, in the same period, been reduced in the same

Gradual improvement in trade.

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place from 5,148 to 3,571 persons.[1] It is impossible to describe more clearly the gratifying improvement in the circumstances of the manufacturing population which commenced in the latter half of 1820, and continued throughout 1821.

Continued depression of the agricultural interest.

But there was one remarkable exception to the general improvement. The agricultural classes had enjoyed the special protection of the Legislature. Means had been taken in 1815 for securing them a remunerative price for their produce; and the farmers had been given a monopoly of the market while the price of wheat was below 80*s.* a quarter. Rather more than five years had passed since the Act of 1815 had become law, and the condition of the agricultural classes was worse than it had ever been. 'Agriculture,' wrote Bankes to Lord Colchester in March 1821, 'is in a state of the most serious and discouraging depression, the price of corn as low as it was thirty years ago; rents ill paid, farmers breaking or ruining themselves, and multitudes of laborious husbandmen all over the kingdom thrown out of work and living on the poor-rates.'[2] The Act of 1815 had, in fact, failed. It had been based on the hypothesis that prices would rise, and, by a strange perversity, they had steadily fallen. In February 1819 the average price of wheat had stood at 78*s.* per quarter, and the importation of foreign corn had in consequence been stopped. No foreign grain was imported till the middle of 1822, and during the whole of the intervening period prices had been steadily falling. The average price of wheat amounted in 1820 to 65*s.* 9*d.*; in 1821 to 54*s.* 5*d.*; in the first three months of 1822 to 47*s.* 9*d.* The primary cause of this fall was to be found in the circumstances of the war. War had made the country entirely dependent on its own productions. The Government had required large quantities of corn for the sustenance of its Continential armies; an extraordinary

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 193. [2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 214.

demand had in consequence been created for agricultural produce; and an unprecedented impulse had been thereby given to agricultural industry. Peace came: the purchases of the Government ceased: universal distress checked the consumption of the lower orders; and the farmers found it impossible to obtain a market for their grain. The landed classes had speculated on a rise in prices; the fall in prices consequent on the over-production of corn overwhelmed them with ruin.

Its causes.

The distress of the agricultural classes was, in the first instance, due to over-production; but it had undoubtedly been aggravated by the return to cash payments which had been decided on in 1819. In consequence of the return to cash payments the price of gold had fallen to its real value, and the fall in the value of gold had been followed by an equal or greater fall in the price of every other article. The price of iron had fallen from 13*l.* a ton in 1818 to 8*l.* a ton in 1822; the price of cotton from 1*s.* to 6*d.* a pound; the price of wool from 2*s.* 1*d.* to 1*s.* 1*d.* the pound.[1] This sudden alteration in the prices of the principal articles of trade naturally led to considerable embarrassment. The few fortunate people who had lent money when gold commanded a high premium were benefited by the change. The interest which they received on the loans which they had advanced was capable of purchasing nearly twice as much corn, cotton, wool, and iron as before. But the very numerous persons who had been compelled to borrow money found themselves in the contrary predicament. The profits of their business were reduced by one-half; but the interest which they had to pay on the loans which they had contracted was unaltered. The country gentlemen were, as a rule, heavily in debt. A country gentleman usually provided for his younger children by charging his estate with a mortgage in their favour, and from this cause alone many estates were

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 114.

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heavily burdened. The impulse which had been given to agriculture during the war had had the effect of multiplying these mortgages. The country gentleman had fancied that a short road to wealth was to be found in the enclosure of an adjacent common or the drainage of a neighbouring swamp. Vast quantities of land had been enclosed or improved, and the enclosures and improvements had been made with borrowed money. While wheat fetched from 80*s.* to 120*s.* the imperial quarter, the expectations of the country gentlemen had not been disappointed. The improvements increased their incomes, and encouraged their neighbours to follow their example. The country gentlemen, indeed, supposed that the Act of 1815 had made it impossible for wheat to fall below 80*s.* a quarter. Till wheat reached this price they were safe from foreign competition, and they imagined that nothing but foreign competition could reduce the price of grain. The over-production of corn at home had, however, exactly the same effect on the market as the importation of corn from abroad. Prices fell, and with the fall of prices the poor land which had been brought into cultivation could no longer be profitably worked. The country gentleman's tenant threw up his farm; but the country gentleman himself could not throw over the mortgage which he had contracted to make the farm. The rent ceased; but the interest of the debt hung like a dead weight round the neck of the unfortunate landlord.

Attitude of the county members.

There was no doubt, then, about the reality of the crisis through which the landed classes were passing. The landed classes, it must be recollected, were the ruling classes. No Ministry could stand without their favour: no Ministry could afford to neglect their grievances. The members for the great agricultural counties were not agreed as to the course which should be pursued, but they were unanimous in determining that something should be done. The great majority of them would,

indeed, have been utterly incapable of devising any remedy for themselves. They supported a Tory Government, and they thought that the least a Tory Government could do for them, in return for their support, was to ensure them high prices for their corn. But there were some half-dozen among them who were not satisfied with leaving the matter to the decision of Government. Western, the member for Essex; Holme Sumner, the member for Surrey; Gooch, the member for Suffolk; and Sir Thomas Lethbridge, the member for Somersetshire, have not left any very great names behind them; but these four men, and one or two others of like calibre, were conspicuous in every agricultural debate, and were, in their way, formidable supporters or opponents. It was Western's attitude in 1816 which had induced the Government to abandon the war malt tax. Holme Sumner, on the 30th of May, 1820, moved for a select committee on the agricultural distress. The debate lasted a great many hours: the country gentlemen had the opportunity of explaining their grievances; economists like Ricardo replied to them; and the Ministry stated their objections to the motion. Everyone imagined that the subject would be talked out. As the night wore on, or, to speak more correctly, as the morning dawned, sleepy members went home to bed, and the country gentlemen were left almost in possession of the House. At four o'clock in the morning the debate came to an end. A division, which no one had expected, was taken; and Holme Sumner, to his own surprise, found himself in a majority of 150 votes to 101.[1]

Their unexpected success.

The victory which the agriculturists had thus unexpectedly secured proved almost as embarrassing to themselves as to the Government. The country gentlemen, on their part, were hardly ready for the investigation which they had demanded, and the Ministry foresaw the

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. i. pp. 635–691. *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 64–76.

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inconvenience of granting it. Sober men were of opinion that the appointment of a committee would raise vague hopes and vain alarms among the farmers, and that, even if the committee were appointed, it would be impossible for it to do anything whatever. The Government was so impressed with the force of these considerations that it decided to take the sting out of the unlucky vote. Robinson, the President of the Board of Trade, was instructed to move that the committee should 'confine their investigations to the mode of ascertaining, returning, and calculating the average prices of corn.' Under the existing law the corn averages were calculated in twelve maritime districts; and the agriculturists contended that the averages should be ascertained from the markets throughout the United Kingdom. An inquiry of this sort could not by any possibility encourage any false expectations; and the Government accordingly brought up all its forces to limit the functions of Holme Sumner's committee in this way. Their numerical strength, of course, gave them an easy victory. Within forty-eight hours of the previous division Robinson's motion was carried by 251 votes to 108. The sting had been effectively taken out of Holme Sumner's victory.[1]

Increased distress among the agricultural classes.

The Ministry had got rid of an embarrassing inquiry, but they had not succeeded in improving the position of the agricultural classes. The summer came; and the valleys and hills in every part of England were clothed with crops of extraordinary abundance. Old men declared that such a harvest had been known only once before during the lifetime of the existing generation.[2] Under any other circumstances the bounty of nature would have removed all traces of despondency from every farmstead. Under the exceptional circumstances of 1820 it only increased the embarrassments of the farmer. The price of wheat had been slowly rising throughout the summer; it

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. i. pp. 714–742. [2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 435.

touched 73*s.* 9*d.* in the middle of August. There appeared, at last, to be some chance of its becoming remunerative to the agriculturist. The abundant harvest disappointed this expectation. The markets, already glutted with corn, were at once affected. The price of wheat fell to 63*s.* 6*d.* in September; to 57*s.* 4*d.* in October; to 56*s.* 4*d.* in November; and to 54*s.* in December.[1] The gloom of the farmers became, under these circumstances, as marked as ever; and their distress seemed the more intolerable because it was no longer shared by the other classes of the community. The textile industries of the Northern counties were especially recovering from their depression; and the labouring classes were finding ready employment, at remunerative wages.[2]

Their proceedings in Parliament.

Influenced by these circumstances, the agriculturists in Parliament again moved, in the session of 1821, for an inquiry into their grievances. Gooch, the member for Suffolk, revived Holme Sumner's motion of the preceding year. The Ministry was not strong; it was suffering from the loss of Canning's services and from the unpopularity which the proceedings against the queen had brought it. It did not dare to offend the country gentlemen, and it accordingly assented to the appointment of a committee.[3] Care, however, was taken that the committee should not be composed of country gentlemen and their spokesmen alone. Some of the ablest members of the House were placed upon it; and, to their intense annoyance, the agriculturists found themselves worsted in their own committee. They withdrew from its meetings, in the hope that it would separate without reporting. Their secession had, however, a contrary effect. The free traders had it all their own way.[4] They drew up a report of considerable length and of marked ability. They analysed all the grievances of the farmers

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., p. 632.
[2] Ibid., 1821, Hist., p. 69.
[3] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. iv. pp. 1139–1161.
[4] Spencer, p. 202.

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with great care; they disposed of all the remedies which had been suggested for removing them; and they concluded that, 'so far as the present depression in the markets is the effect of abundance from our own growth, the inconvenience arises from a cause which no legislative provision can alleviate; so far as it is the result of the increased value of our money, it is one not peculiar to the farmer, but which has been, and still is, experienced by many other classes of society.' It was difficult to gainsay the justice of these conclusions, but they were truths which the agricultural committee had certainly not been appointed to state.[1]

The Malt Tax.

The report of the committee was the more discouraging to the agriculturists, because they had encountered another disappointment in another quarter. On the 22nd of March, a fortnight after the appointment of the agricultural committee, Western, the member for Essex, introduced a bill for the repeal of the additional duty which had been imposed upon malt in 1819. The additional duty amounted to 1*s.* 2¼*d.* a barrel, and yielded rather more than 1,000,000*l.* a year. The agriculturists succeeded in carrying their motion against the Government by 149 votes to 125. The victory was almost as significant as that on Holme Summer's motion in the previous year; but the exultation of the majority was equally shortlived. Western moved the second reading of his bill on the 3rd of April. The Government exerted themselves to reverse the previous decision of the House; their exertions were, of course, successful; and the bill was thrown out by 242 votes to 144. Two days after the division, Curwen, the member for Cumberland, moved the repeal of the tax on horses engaged in agriculture. The tax was not very productive, and it fell with peculiar severity on the small farmers. The Ministry did

[1] For the report, which is well worth reading, see *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 506–535.

not wish to offend the country gentlemen again, and they persuaded Curwen to postpone his motion till after the report of the agricultural committee. Curwen partially complied with their request. He postponed his motion for a time; but he again brought it forward on the 14th of June, a few days before the committee reported. The committee, he was able to assure the House, had discussed the subject, and had arrived at a conclusion unfavourable to the tax. The Ministry again endeavoured to procure the postponement of the motion. Curwen, however, persisted in persevering with it, and succeeded in carrying it by 141 votes to 113. On this occasion the Ministry did not attempt to reverse the decision of the House. The agricultural horse tax was repealed. But the repeal of this tax afforded only slight consolation to men who had carried the reduction of the malt duty against the Government, and who had forced the Ministry to concede the agricultural committee.[1]

The proceedings of the agriculturists in the recess.

The disappointment of the agriculturists was then very keen; and as the year wore on, and no improvement in their circumstances occurred, its expression became more and more audible. Abundance in 1820 had increased the embarrassments of the farmers. The harvest in 1821 was destroyed by a wet autumn. The corn lay rotting in the fields, and the farmers were unable to gather it.[2] The bad season, however, did not raise prices from the level to which the good season had reduced them. The markets were still glutted with agricultural produce; and prices continued to fall. At the end of the year wheat was selling at 46*s.* 2*d.* a quarter.[3] But the farmers were no longer waiting in patience for the inter-

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. v. pp. 42–47, 1192. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 88–90. The voting power of the agriculturists was evidently about 150. In their three successes in 1820 and 1821 they divided: 150, 149, and 141. In their defeat on the malt tax they divided 144. The Ministry owed its defeats to its own supineness, and not to the strength of the country gentlemen.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 241.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 309.

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vention of the Legislature. The report of the agricultural committee had satisfied them that nothing was to be expected from Parliament; and meetings were consequently summoned in rural counties to consider what should be done. The spectacle was one which England had never previously witnessed. The classes dependent on the land had always been notorious for the Conservatism of their views and the soberness of their opinions. Landlords and tenant-farmers, stung into action by distress, suddenly assumed the character of political agitators. Owners and occupiers joined in demanding the most drastic remedies for their grievances. The most orderly among them insisted on the entire exclusion of foreign corn from British markets, and the wholesale reduction of the taxation which pressed on the agricultural interest. The most violent among them declared that, if taxation could be reduced in no other way, faith must be broken with the public creditor and the National Debt repudiated. The Parliament, which had refused in 1820 to appoint an agricultural committee—the Parliament, which had ventured in 1821 to appoint a committee unprepared for legislation, was everywhere denounced. Landlords and tenant-farmers joined with the Radicals in demanding Parliamentary reform.[1]

The excitement in the agricultural districts was, in a political sense, a much more formidable matter for the Government than the massacre at Peterloo or the famous battle of Bonnymuir. The country gentlemen had rallied to a man in support of the Six Acts, because the Six Acts had been directed against the Radicals; but disaffection among the landed classes could not be similarly dealt with, because it destroyed the voting power of the Tory majority in the House of Commons. The Ministry was, in consequence, compelled to change its tactics. It had refused inquiry in 1820; it had conceded inquiry in 1821; it courted

[1] *Annual Register*, 1822, Hist., pp. 1, 2.

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inquiry in 1822. Lord Londonderry—for Lord Castlereagh had succeeded to his father's Irish marquisate—himself proposed the revival of the agricultural committee.[1] The report which the new committee quickly drew up was much less elaborate and much less able than that which had been prepared by the agricultural committee of the previous year; but it was much better calculated to meet the wishes of the agriculturists. The Act of 1815 was self-condemned. No corn had ever been imported under it, because the price of corn had never reached the sum which had been named in it. The committee, therefore, recommended that the useless Act should be repealed, and that foreign corn should be admitted on paying a duty of 12*s.* when the price of wheat stood at 70*s.* a quarter. The duty, it was proposed, should fall as the price of wheat rose. If the price rose to 80*s.* the duty was to fall to 5*s.*; if the price rose to 85*s.* the duty was to fall to 1*s.*

A new agricultural committee appointed.

The new Corn Law which was thus contemplated would have had no effect on the existing juncture, since the price of wheat was far below the 70*s.* named in the report.[2] As a sop to the agricultural interest it was, therefore, proposed that the Government should be authorised to lend a sum of 1,000,000*l.* on the security of warehoused corn. The proposal met its chief opponent in a remarkable person. Ricardo was the most capable of the economical writers who succeeded Adam Smith. His reputation as an economist has not diminished since his death. He had obtained a seat for the little Irish borough of Portarlington; he had served on the agricultural committee of 1821; and the weight of his authority on all

[1] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vi. p. 462.

[2] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vi. p. 1406. The scale was not to come into operation till the limits of free importation fixed by the Act of 1815 had been reached; *i.e.* until wheat stood at 80*s.* a quarter. As a matter of fact this price was never reached before 1828, when the law was altered; and the Act of 1822 was consequently as inoperative as the Act of 1815.

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commercial and economical questions was recognised on both sides of the House. Ricardo was not in favour of free trade; but he desired to go a step nearer to it than the committee intended. He proposed that when the price of corn rose to 70*s.* foreign wheat should be admitted with a duty of 20*s.*; but that the duty should be reduced by 1*s.* a year till it reached 10*s.*, when it should become fixed and unalterable. The committee, in short, proposed a sliding scale dependent on the price; Ricardo a fixed scale irrespective of the price.

The House dissatisfied.

The debates on these rival proposals occupied the time of the House for many nights. Lord Londonderry, who adopted the committee's recommendation, ultimately withdrew the proposal for a loan, and the committee's scale was then agreed to by a large majority.[1] The country gentlemen were not, however, disposed to regard the acceptance of the scale as a settlement of the question. They had committed themselves at county meetings to very different measures, and regard for their own consistency compelled them to move for a more effective remedy. Sir Thomas Lethbridge, the member for Somersetshire, advocated the claims of the extreme Protectionists, and proposed a fixed duty of 40*s.* a quarter on all foreign corn. Sir Francis Burdett, the Radical member for Westminster, boldly claimed a readjustment of the public burdens. The public creditor, he argued, might be entitled to his due; but he could not be entitled to more than his due. The man who had lent his money when Bank paper was a legal tender had no right to expect that he should be paid in gold. Burdett's proposal involved the partial repudiation of the debt. Western, the member for Essex, was in favour of the same thing, though he desired, for the sake of decency, to cover the

[1] By 218 votes to 36. *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vii. p. 470. Huskisson opposed Lord Londonderry on the loan question, and offered to resign. Lord Liverpool very wisely refused to let him go. See *Hansard*, N.S., vol. xix. p. 925.

policy of repudiation with a thin veil which hardly concealed its nakedness from anyone. He was not in favour of paying the public creditor 3*l.* instead of 4*l.*; but he was in favour of depreciating the currency till the 4*l.* was only worth 3*l.*

Repudiation suggested.

When the debt was contracted corn sold for 80*s.* a quarter. The currency—so Western thought—should be depreciated till the price again rose to 80*s.*; and corn, and not gold, should be made the standard of value. One hundred and twenty-six years had passed since such a proposal had been openly advocated in the House of Commons. One hundred and twenty-six years before, the reform of the currency, which had been undertaken by Montague and Newton, had produced embarrassments very similar, in their cause and their consequence, to those which had resulted from the return to cash payments. The Legislature, in 1696, had been terrified at the universal fall in prices, and had proposed to check its progress by degrading the currency. Happily for England the finance minister of that day was one of the few great financiers whom this country has ever produced. Charles Montague met the motion of his timid colleagues with a bold declaratory resolution that 'this House will not consent to alter the standard of the gold and silver coins of this kingdom in fineness.' The resolution was carried: and with the success of the motion the difficulty began to disappear. Prices recovered when it was once seen that the Legislature would not sanction any tampering with the currency, and confidence was restored.

Huskisson's motion.

Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of 1822, was in every way inferior to Charles Montague. But an obscure office of Lord Liverpool's Administration was fortunately occupied by a financier of greater capacity. Few things are more singular in the history of the present century than the treatment which was usually awarded to William Huskisson. Huskisson was undoubtedly the

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first financier in the House of Commons; yet he was never Chancellor of the Exchequer. Vansittart, who was hardly fit to be his clerk, was preferred to him in 1812; Robinson, who knew nothing of finance, was preferred to him in 1823. There are only two explanations which can be given for this neglect. Huskisson was passed over in 1812 because he was the friend of Canning; he was passed over in 1823 because he was much less constant in his support of the Ministry than his successful colleague. Yet Huskisson, in 1822, met the country gentlemen alone; and the speech with which he defeated Western's motion was one of the most remarkable financial addresses ever delivered in the House of Commons: 'The honourable gentleman says that the standard of value in every country should be that article which forms the constant food of the population. He, therefore, finds a standard of value for this country in wheat. It follows from this principle that wheat cannot be the standard in Ireland. There potatoes must be the standard of value. Who ever heard of a potato standard?' After covering Western with ridicule Huskisson went on to refer to Montague's great example in 1696, and concluded by proposing that the House should reaffirm Montague's famous resolution. The effect was magical. Lethbridge's and Burdett's motions had already been defeated.[1] Western's proposition was now rejected; and the House, adopting Huskisson's suggestion, re-affirmed the resolution of 1696.[2]

The repeal of the Act of 1815 and the institution of a new Corn Law were not, however, the only results of agricultural distress. The repudiation of the debt and the degradation of the currency had been suggested because both of these methods seemed to promise a large

[1] The former by 243 votes to 24, on the 9th of May. *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vii. p. 453.

[2] *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vii. pp. 877, 910, 925, 1027. Macaulay's works, edited by Lady Trevelyan, vol. iv. p. 266.

surplus revenue; and a surplus revenue would facilitate the reduction of taxation. It was obvious, however, that a surplus revenue was also obtainable by the simple process of reducing the expenditure; and it so happened that economy, for the first time, was becoming popular among a section of the House of Commons. Joseph Hume, the constant advocate of retrenchment, had been elected for Aberdeen at the general election of 1818. He had been born in 1777, at Montrose; his father, who died while his son was very young, was the master of a coasting vessel. His mother, after her husband's death, kept a small shop in which she sold crockery to her neighbours. The boy, born in these humble circumstances, was educated in the school of the town. He was apprenticed, while he was still a boy, to a local surgeon-apothecary; he became in 1796 a member of the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh; and he obtained in 1797 an appointment as assistant-surgeon in the marine service of the East India Company. He soon discovered that the members of the service were generally ignorant of the languages of the races whom they were called upon to govern; and, with characteristic perseverance, he set himself to study the native tongues. His perseverance was rewarded. The Mahratta war broke out. The Government required an interpreter; and Hume, who had already qualified himself for such a service, was selected for the post. Frugal habits enabled him to save a considerable sum of money out of his income, and to return home, in 1808, with a fortune of 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.* Three years afterwards, he purchased a seat at Weymouth, and entered Parliament as a Tory member. He had stipulated that he should again be returned at the next general election; but the patron of the borough broke faith with him and selected another candidate. Hume's Tory principles sustained a rude shock from this shabby treatment. He instituted pro-

Joseph Hume.

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ceedings against the patron of the borough; and, the case being referred to arbitration, recovered a large sum of money from him. But, though he recovered his money, he lost his seat. He remained out of Parliament for a few years. At the general election of 1818 he was returned for Aberdeen; he represented that borough for thirty-six years; and during the whole of that period he was the constant and unflinching advocate of economical reform.[1]

His first labours for economical reform.

Hume commenced his labours in favour of retrenchment in 1820. On the 4th of July he drew attention to the absurdly costly system under which the revenue was collected. There were sixty-six receivers-general of land and assessed taxes. They were allowed a poundage of 2*d.* in the pound on the land tax, and of 1½*d.* in the pound on the assessed taxes; they retained in their own hands the whole sum which they collected for about six weeks. They, therefore, drew a very large salary as poundage, and they derived a considerable advantage from the use of the public money as it passed through their hands. It was computed that the profit of each of these officials exceeded 2,000*l.* a year. Yet only twenty-eight of the sixty-six fortunate gentlemen who enjoyed the emoluments of receivers-general performed any duties at all. The remaining thirty-eight acted entirely by deputies. Hume desired to abolish this system; but his proposal was vehemently resisted by the Government and defeated without a division. Undaunted by this defeat, Hume, in the following year, again drew attention to the absurdly extravagant system of collecting the revenue. The open mutiny of the country gentlemen made it no longer possible for the Ministry to stifle a motion for economy. On the preceding evening Western had carried the repeal of the additional malt tax; and the Government dared not risk another

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1858, Chron., p. 252.

defeat. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to refer Hume's resolutions to a select committee, and Hume at once acquiesced with this suggestion. The committee reported in the course of the session. They recommended that the number of receivers-general should be reduced from sixty-six to forty-four; that these officers should be paid a fixed salary; that they should be compelled to perform their own duties; and that they should not be allowed to employ the public moneys which passed through their hands. The perseverance and ability of a private member, backed by the discontent of the country gentlemen, had won one of the most important economical victories which had ever been secured in the British Parliament.[1]

Hume's exertions did not stop at this point. He was not satisfied with exposing the absurdly extravagant system under which the revenue was collected. He was bent on reducing the cost of government. With this object he drew up some elaborate tables to illustrate the progressive increase in the expenditure of the nation during the four preceding years, and to contrast the expenditure of 1820 with that of 1792, the year which had immediately preceded the Great War. He embodied the substance of these tables in a series of resolutions which he introduced during the debate on the army estimates. The country was not prepared to accept all the economies on which Hume insisted, and the Government in consequence was easily able to defeat his resolutions.[2] They were able to do so the more easily because they themselves had anticipated the universal demand for retrenchment and had reduced their expenditure. The army estimates were reduced to 8,750,000*l.*; the navy estimates to 6,176,700*l.*; the ordnance estimates to 1,195,100*l.*; the miscellaneous estimates to 1,900,000*l.*;

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., p. 105, and 1821, p. 87, and Chron., p. 101.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 84–87, and Chron., pp. 282, 286.

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and the charge of the unfunded debt was decreased to 1,290,000*l.* These various items, which had required about 21,000,000*l.* in the previous year, were placed at only 19,311,800*l.* in 1821. In the previous year, moreover, the Government had increased their embarrassments by funding 9,000,000*l.* of the unfunded debt. They proposed to fund only 706,400*l.* of the unfunded debt in 1821. The whole sum which they desired to raise amounted, therefore, to only 20,018,200*l.* The annual taxes and excise duties produced 5,500,000*l.* of this amount. A windfall of 500,000*l.*—a surplus of the French indemnity—swelled the sum to 6,000,000*l.* Various other items were estimated at 570,000*l.*; and the Bank of Ireland was allowed to increase its capital on condition of advancing 460,000*l.* to the Government. These sums produced an aggregate revenue of 7,030,000*l.* The additional 13,000,000*l.* was borrowed from the Sinking Fund. As the Sinking Fund exceeded 17,000,000*l.* there was no difficulty in carrying out this arrangement.[1]

The financial arrangements in 1821.

Incapacity of the Liverpool Administration.

The Budget, which was thus propounded, was the simplest which Vansittart had ever framed; but it would have been impossible for the Government to have carried a more complicated one. Lord Liverpool's Administration had frequently been regarded with contempt by the public; but the contempt had never been so undisguised as during the session of 1821. 'As to ministers,' said Curwen, in the House of Commons, on the 23rd of January, 'they had fully proved their inability to govern. Never was the community so universally impressed with the conviction of the incapacity of their responsible rulers as at the present moment; so general was that feeling that all ranks of men looked to their removal as their only hope.'[2] But as the session advanced the inability of the Ministry to govern became more marked. On the

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 1073 1098.
[2] Ibid., N.S., vol. iv. p. 46.

7th of March the Government was compelled to concede to Gooch the appointment of the agricultural committee. On the 22nd of March, Western carried his motion for the repeal of the malt tax. On the 23rd of March the Ministry were again compelled to give way, and to concede to Hume a committee on the receivers-general; and, on the 14th of June, Curwen carried the repeal of the agricultural horse tax against the Government. The ministers who had suffered such severe defeats had almost ceased to govern: it was obviously necessary for them to acquire additional strength. The necessity was the greater because the vacancy which had been occasioned by Canning's retirement was still unfilled, and because Lord Sidmouth was anxious to retire from the labours of the Home Department. There were three distinct quarters to which the Government could turn for aid. Canning was far the most brilliant of the Parliamentary speakers of his generation. He had only separated from the Ministry in consequence of his reluctance to take a part against the Queen; and the termination of the proceedings against her suggested his reinstatement in office. Peel was a younger man than Canning; but his Parliamentary reputation was increasing more rapidly than that of any other member. So far back as 1811[1] he was allowed to be the most promising young man in the House. It was said of him, in 1820, that 'talents, independent fortune, official habits, and reputation, and, above all, general character, both in and out of Parliament, have disposed more men to follow and more to unite with him than any other person.'[2]

1821.

Attempted reconstruction of the Government.

Canning and Peel were undoubtedly the two most prominent Tories outside the Ministry available for the purposes of debate. But Lord Liverpool was desirous of obtaining, in addition to them, the services of the small

[1] Plumer Ward's memoirs, vol. i. p. 408.

[2] Buckingham's *Memoirs of Geo. IV.*, vol. i. p. 102.

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party which had identified itself with the fortunes of Lord Grenville. Ever since the conclusion of the war Lord Grenville had been gradually separating himself from his old colleague, Lord Grey. Lord Grey had been steadily maintaining the principles with which he had begun his Parliamentary career. Lord Grenville had been slowly gravitating towards the Ministry. In some respects, indeed, Lord Grenville had shown himself a stouter Tory than the Tories: he had urged the repressive legislation of 1819 on the Government. Lord Grenville himself, indeed, did not desire office. The lead of his party had descended to his nephew, Lord Buckingham. Lord Buckingham could have counted his supporters on the fingers of his two hands. There was his brother, Lord Nugent, who had inherited his mother's Irish earldom. There were his two cousins, sons of Charlotte Grenville, Sir Watkin Wynn, the member for Denbighshire, and Charles Wynn, the member for Montgomeryshire. There were his cousin, Sir G. Nugent, and his neighbour, Fremantle, who sat for his lordship's borough of Buckingham. There was Phillimore, who sat for his lordship's other borough of St. Mawes. Lord Buckingham might, perhaps, have commanded a dozen votes on a division by mustering all his nominees and all his relatives.

Lord Liverpool desired to avail himself of the services of all these parties. Lord Sidmouth was to retire from the Home Office, and to be succeeded by Lord Melville. Canning was to replace Lord Melville at the Admiralty; and either Peel or Charles Wynn was to fill the vacant place at the India Board. But there were two difficulties in the way of this arrangement. The king objected to Canning, and Peel thought that he had claims for a higher post than the India Board.[1] The negotiation

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 142. Duke of Wellington's supplementary despatches, vol. i. pp. 176, 192–196.

seemed doomed to failure at the very outset; and it was also interrupted by another unfortunate event. It had hardly commenced when Lady Liverpool died. Lord Liverpool broke down under his affliction, and some months were permitted to elapse before the negotiation was resumed. The king, it was then found, still adhered to his objection to Canning. Canning's disappointment was soothed by the promise of the Governor-Generalship of India, which Lord Hastings was desirous of relinquishing. Peel, unwilling to accept the India Board, was appointed, on Lord Sidmouth's retirement, to the Home Office; and the co-operation of the small band which followed Lord Buckingham, was also secured.

Its junction with the Grenvilles.

Lord Buckingham was gratified by being promoted to a dukedom, with a special remainder of the earldom of Temple to his daughter. Charles Wynn was made president of the Board of Control; his brother, Henry Wynn, envoy to Switzerland, the salary of the post being specially raised to 4,000*l.* a year; and Phillimore and Fremantle were given inferior appointments at the India Board. The appointments gave the Ministry a few votes, but they hardly satisfied anyone. Extravagantly as the Duke of Buckingham had been rewarded, his 'immeasurable pretensions,'[1] as the king styled them, were still unsatisfied. Fremantle considered that he was entitled to a better berth than Phillimore, and that Wynn's appointment was 'much beyond his pretensions.'[2] Men who had no connection with Lord Grenville were amazed at the price which Lord Liverpool had agreed to pay for this slender accession of strength. 'No small and insignificant party was ever bought so dear as this rump of the Grenvilles,' wrote Bankes to Lord Col-

[1] The duke continued unsatisfied and insatiable. He was always urging his claims on the Ministry. See on this point, for instance, Wellington supplementary despatches, vol. ii. pp. 131, 142, 145, and vol. v. 440.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 206. Buckingham's *Memoirs of George IV.*, vol. i. pp. 265. 281.

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chester.[1] Lord Holland declared that 'all articles are now to be had at low prices, except Grenvilles.' The peculiarity of Charles Wynn's voice had won for his brother, Sir Watkin, and himself, the nicknames of 'Bubble and Squeak.' Lord Erskine, alluding to this peculiarity, observed that 'ministers are hard-run, but they still have a squeak for it.'[2]

Reinforced by the ability of Peel, and strengthened by the voting power of the Duke of Buckingham's supporters, the Ministry met Parliament on the 5th of February 1822. The members of the House of Commons were assured that the revenue was 'in a course of progressive improvement;' that the estimates had 'been framed with every attention to economy which the circumstances of the country will permit;' and that his Majesty had been enabled to make 'a large reduction in our annual expenditure, particularly in our naval and military establishments.' The assurance, which was thus given, was abundantly redeemed. The estimates for 1821 had exceeded 19,300,000*l.* The estimates for 1822 amounted to only 17,815,000*l.*[3] The perseverance of Hume and the distress of the agricultural classes had forced this great reduction on the Ministry. Great, however, as the reduction was, the Ministry desired to effect

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 249.
[2] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 447.

[3]

	£
The Army estimates	7,925,000
„ Navy „	5,480,000
„ Ordnance „	1,200,000
„ Miscellaneous	1,700,000
„ Greenwich outpensions	310,000
„ Interest on Exchequer bills	1,200,000
Total	£17,815,000

In addition to this 17,815,000*l.* there was a further charge of 290,000*l.* sinking fund of Exchequer bills; and the scheme for converting the Navy 5 per cents., which will be mentioned later on, involved an additional charge of 2,863,000*l.* The deficiency in the ways and means of the previous year amounted to rather more than 290,000*l.*—*Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 148, and *Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 1415.

larger remissions of taxation than a mere economy in the great spending departments of the State would have enabled them to afford. The National Debt hung like a dead weight round the shoulders of the nation, and the policy of repudiating the debt was openly discussed. Men fancied that it was impracticable to go on paying the vast charge which the debt occasioned; and they almost openly avowed that it would be necessary to resort to the sponge at last. Such language, five years before, would have led to the appointment of a secret committee, and to a State prosecution by the Attorney-General. But it was one thing to indict a Watson or a Hunt; it was another to prosecute a county member. The language which had been first heard in the Spa Fields was now used at county meetings, duly convened by the constituted authorities. Country gentlemen, whose support was invaluable to the Government, were demonstrating the folly of keeping faith with the fundholder. County members, whose political opinions were otherwise unimpeachable, were actually voting for repudiation under the cloak of debasing the currency. The Ministry were unable to ignore the great issue which was thus openly raised. They had the wisdom to see the folly of either tampering with the currency or of repudiating the debt;[1] but they decided on obtaining some alleviation from its burden in a less objectionable manner.

Continued demand for repudiation.

The funded debt in 1822 amounted to rather more than 795,000,000*l.* But this debt did not all bear the same rate of interest. The money had been borrowed at 3 per cent., 3½ per cent., 4 per cent., and 5 per cent.; and more than 153,000,000*l.* of the amount carried in-

The conversion of the 5 per cents.

[1] Repudiation, in one shape or another, found favour with an enormous number of people. A good many politicians, who would have objected to reverting to an inconvertible paper currency, were disposed to adopt silver as the standard of value, or, at any rate, to associate it with gold. Lord Althorp was inclined to adopt this remedy. J. W. Ward (Lord Dudley) was also in favour of it.

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terest at 5 per cent. This portion of the debt was usually known as the Navy 5 per cents. The Act, under which this money had been chiefly borrowed[1] stipulated that the 5 per cents. should be irredeemable till 25,000,000*l.* 3 per cent. Stock had been paid off. A previous Act had directed that no portion of the 3 per cents. should be redeemed without twelve months' notice to the holders thereof.[2] The Sinking Fund had, however, discharged considerably more than 25,000,000*l.* of the 3 per cents.; and the Government, therefore, contended that they were at liberty to proceed with the redemption of the 5 per cents. The Opposition, on the other hand, insisted that the purchases of the Sinking Fund Commissioners could not be held to constitute a redemption of the debt, and that it was, therefore, a breach of faith to proceed with the conversion of the 5 per cents. The technical issues which were thus raised were urged with some warmth in both Houses of Parliament. But the good sense of the majority perceived that technicalities of this character had very little claim on their consideration. The real question for debate was the willingness or reluctance of the fundholders to accept the terms which were offered to them. The moment that it was seen that the terms were sufficiently liberal the success of the scheme was assured.

The terms which the Ministry offered were as follows:—Every holder of 100*l.* 5 per cent. Stock was to be at liberty to receive 105*l.* New 4 per cent. Stock. But any person objecting to this arrangement was to be paid off at *par*. The value of 100*l.* 4 per cent. Stock in February, when the offer was made, was about 98*l.*; the value of 100*l.* 5 per cent. Stock was about 105*l.* 10*s.* The holder, therefore, who accepted the Government terms received Stock worth about 103*l.*; the holder who refused them had the alternative of accepting 100*l.* in money. There could

[1] 24 George III. c. 39, s. 6. [2] 25 George II. c. 27, s. 24.

not, under these circumstances, be much doubt about the success of the scheme. The dissentients among the fundholders were very few, and about 150,000,000*l.* out of the whole amount of 153,000,000*l.* was converted into a 4 per cent. Stock. The gain to the country by this arrangement was very great. The interest of 150,000,000*l.* Stock at 5 per cent. amounted to 7,500,000*l.*; the interest on 157,500,000*l.* Stock at 4 per cent. amounted to 6,300,000*l.* The country, in other words, saved about 1,200,000*l.* by the operation.[1] After ten years' tenure of office, Vansittart had originated one scheme of indisputable utility. If he had been prudent enough to be satisfied with this single plan, his last year's tenure of office might possibly have redeemed his reputation. But he was either too ambitious or too timid to be satisfied with the great economy which he had already effected. He supplemented his scheme for converting the Navy 5 per cents. into 4 per cents. with another for the reduction of the charge which was occasioned by the various pensions granted to officers in the army, navy, and the civil service. The amount of these pensions was about 4,900,000*l.* The sum, therefore, was a large one; it was a tempting one for a minister to deal with; and Vansittart probably imagined that his scheme for dealing with it was even more successful than his plan for converting the Navy 5 per cents. He committed himself, in consequence, to the worst of the many bad proposals with which his tenure of office is associated.

The creation of the dead weight.

The scheme which Vansittart proposed may be briefly stated. The pensions amounted to about 4,900,000*l.* They were all granted on lives, some of them on old lives, and some portion of the amount was, therefore, constantly falling in on the death of some of the pensioners. In course of time the whole amount would inevitably expire, and the country would be relieved of the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. vi. p. 663. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 127–130.

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entire burden. It was calculated that in seven years' time the 4,900,000*l.* would be reduced to 4,000,000*l.*; that in fifteen years' time it would be less than 3,000,000*l.*; that in twenty-three years' time it would only amount to 2,000,000*l.*; and in thirty-three years to only 1,000,000*l.* It was calculated also that the value of a fixed annuity of 2,800,000*l.* running for forty-five years would be about equivalent to the gross value of the various life annuities. Vansittart, therefore, proposed to conclude a bargain with some large capitalists, under which the Government should undertake to pay 2,800,000*l.* a year for forty-five years, and the capitalists on their part should undertake to meet the claims of all the annuitants.

It was obvious that the scheme relieved the existing generation of a large charge, and that it imposed a heavy burden on the succeeding one. It was equivalent to borrowing 2,100,000*l.* during the succeeding twelve months, and a gradually decreasing sum during the fourteen succeeding years, to be repaid, with compound interest, after the expiration of that period. In other words, it was the exact reverse of the Sinking Fund, to which Vansittart still adhered. The theory of the Sinking Fund was that a sum of money accumulating at compound interest would annually redeem a constantly increasing proportion of the debt. Vansittart's new scheme practically involved the raising of annual loans, to be redeemed, with compound interest, by another generation. It naturally met with sharp criticism during its progress through Parliament. Ricardo sarcastically suggested that the pay of the army and navy should be commuted for a fixed annuity running for a period of years. Brougham, with equal sarcasm, proposed to farm off the pensioners and the ministers themselves. Hume desired to take the sum which it was necessary to borrow from the Sinking Fund. But the sarcasm and the common sense of Ricardo, Brougham, and Hume made little or no impres-

sion on the House of Commons. The great majority of the members were bewildered with a scheme which they only partly understood, and which was imperfectly explained by its author. A good many of the country gentlemen were probably unwilling to reject a proposal which obviously effected an immediate saving of some 2,000,000*l.* a year; and the scheme, in consequence, was adopted by the House.

The failure and modification of Vansittart's plan.

The adoption of the scheme, however, introduced the Ministry to a new difficulty. It became necessary to find some capitalists who were prepared to undertake the contract, and the operation of the scheme was so great that the largest capitalists declined to have anything to do with it. Vansittart, after forcing his proposal through the House of Commons, found to his annoyance that his project was a failure. But he did not, in consequence, abandon the whole proposal. He persuaded the House to vest in trustees an annuity of 2,800,000*l.* a year, running for forty-five years, and to require the trustees from time to time to pay into the Treasury the sum required for the pensions and superannuations. The trustees could obviously make these payments by borrowing in the money market, and they were accordingly authorised either to raise money by Exchequer bills or to sell portions of the annuity. The scheme, in its amended shape, was perhaps less objectionable than the original plan; but its objections, if less grave, were much more plain. It was no longer possible to disguise the fact that the new trustees were appointed to discharge a duty which was the exact reverse of that which the commissioners of the Sinking Fund were performing. One set of trustees was avowedly contracting loans accumulating at compound interest; the other set were endeavouring to reduce the debt by the action of compound interest. It was in vain, however, that Hume proposed that the sum required in excess of the fixed amount of

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2,800,000*l.* during the next fifteen years should be taken from the Sinking Fund. No one attempted to meet his arguments, but hardly anyone offered to support his views. Hume's proposal was rejected, and Vansittart's complicated arrangement received the sanction of the Legislature.[1]

A considerable reduction had thus been effected in the expenditure of the country. The conversion of the Navy 5 per cents. had occasioned a saving of 1 200,000*l.* a year; at the cost of a further charge, the fixed annuity, or the 'dead weight annuity,' as it was termed, had enabled the minister to make an immediate reduction in the expenditure of more than 2,000,000*l.* But the clamour for economy, which agricultural distress had promoted, was so great that Vansittart was not satisfied with these reductions. The dead weight annuity had reduced the existing charge of pensions and superannuations. Vansittart determined that the members of the civil service should, in future, themselves provide a portion of the cost of their own pensions. The superannuations granted to retired members of the service averaged, it was found, about 10 per cent. of the sum paid in salaries to civil servants. Vansittart proposed that each member of the service should pay a tax of 5 per cent. on his salary, which should assist to defray the cost of superannuation.[2] Officers of the royal household, and offices held at the pleasure of the crown, including those of the ministers,

Tax on civil service salaries.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 737–758, 782–785. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, pp. 130–137. Lord King, in the House of Lords, actually moved a long preamble to the bill, concluding by enacting 'that a series of loans shall be raised in a circuitous manner, and that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury shall have power to lend to themselves, and to borrow of themselves, and to conceal the whole transaction from themselves, and from all other ignorant and well-disposed persons.' Lord Harrowby seems to have taken the joke seriously.—*Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 1397.

[2] Persons with less than 100*l.* a year were to pay only 2*l.* 10*s.* per cent.; and persons enjoying offices whose salaries were marked for reduction were to pay 10*l.* per cent., or the portion of the salary to be hereafter reduced.—*Hansard*, New Series vol. vi. pp. 1015–1039.

were at the same time subjected to a tax of 10 per cent. It was estimated that these reductions would effect a saving of 373,000*l.* a year.[1]

Demand for further economies.

Great as were the reductions which had thus been made, the Opposition was not satisfied. They attacked the salaries of the lay Lords of the Admiralty; they impugned the necessity of employing two Postmasters-General; they denounced the Presidency of the Board of Control as a sinecure; they demanded the revision of the diplomatic expenditure; and they insisted on the reduction of the special salary which had been awarded to Henry Wynn, the envoy to the Swiss Cantons. In some of these debates the Ministry succeeded in resisting the arguments of the economists. Canning exerted his unequalled eloquence to prove that the Presidency of the Board of Control, an office which he had himself occupied, was a hard-worked situation.[2] Lord Londonderry declared that, if the motion on the diplomatic expenditure were carried, he would retire from office. The eloquence of Canning insured the ministers a majority on the one subject; the threat of Lord Londonderry gave them a majority on the other. But the Ministry were less successful in defending the salaries of the junior Lords of the Admiralty, or in proving that two Postmasters-General were necessary for the management of the Post Office. The reduction of the Admiralty vote was carried by 182 votes to 128; and the ministers, finding themselves in a minority, abolished the two junior Lordships. The abolition of one of the offices of Postmaster-General was carried, on the 2nd of May, by 216 votes to 201. Lord Salisbury was immediately dismissed from the office; and ministers explained that the reduction in England would be followed by a similar reduction in Ireland.[3]

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 139.
[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vi. pp. 1120–1165.
[3] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vi. p. 881; vol. vii. p. 312. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 141–147.

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Reduction of taxation.

The Ministry was thus compelled to attend to the almost universal demand for retrenchment; they were equally unable to ignore the general wish for a reduction of taxation. At the commencement of the session they announced their intention of remitting the additional duty on malt, which had formed the subject of so fierce a contest in the preceding year. The Ministry probably hoped that the remission of a tax, which was thought to fall with peculiar severity on the agricultural classes, would satisfy their demand for retrenchment. But the partial concession only whetted the appetite of the taxpayers for further reductions. A motion, made on the 28th of February, for the gradual repeal of the salt tax was only lost by a majority of four.[1] So narrow an escape from defeat compelled the Ministry again to give way. The duty on salt was reduced from 15*s.* to 2*s.* a bushel; the duty on leather was reduced by one-half; the tonnage duty on shipping was abolished; and the Irish window and hearth taxes were repealed. The various reforms of the Government had effected an immediate reduction in the expenditure of the country of 3,673,000*l.* a year. The repeal of taxation relieved the taxpayers of an annual burden of 3,500,000*l.*[2]

Such were the leading reforms introduced by Vansittart in 1822. Excluding the charges on the Consolidated Fund, the expenditure of the year was fixed

[1] 169 votes to 165. *Hansard*, N.S., vol. vi. p. 860.

[2] The amounts were as follows:—

1. *Reductions of Expenditure.*	£
By conversion of Navy 5 per cents.	1,200,000
„ dead weight annuities	2,100,000
„ duty on offices	373,000
Total	£3,673,000

2. *Reductions of Expenditure.*	£
By annual malt duty	1,500,000
„ salt tax	1,300,000
„ leather duty	300,000
„ duty on tonnage	150,000
„ Irish hearth and window tax	250,000
Total	£3,500,000

—*Ann. Reg.*, 1822, p. 148.

at 17,815,000*l.*; the available revenue was less than 5,000,000*l.* 7,500,000*l.* of the deficit was raised by a loan on the Sinking Fund, the residue by the issue of the Exchequer Bills. In announcing these arrangements, Vansittart undertook to constitute the Sinking Fund on a fresh basis in the following session. Long before the next session, however, an event occurred which led to his own retirement from the Exchequer, and which ultimately altered the whole history of England.

The death of Lord Londonderry.

The session had been protracted to an unusually late period. Parliament was not prorogued till the 6th of August. The Opposition laid the blame of the delay on the Government; the Ministry attributed it to the proceedings of the Opposition. The warm discussions, which had again and again been renewed, had proved particularly harassing to ministers, and the brunt of the battle had as usual fallen on Lord Londonderry. The alterations which had been made in the composition of the Government during the previous autumn had not relieved him from much labour. Peel, in weakly health, had done little beyond attending to the immediate duties of his own department, and Charles Wynn was universally admitted to have proved a failure. Under these circumstances Lord Londonderry had had an unusual strain cast upon him. Weakened by an attack of gout, he complained, as the session wore on, of overwork. His usually clear handwriting became almost illegible in June and July; and on one occasion, in the House, he disclaimed all knowledge of a subject which had been just carefully explained to him.[1] His wife and his friends, however, felt no great anxiety about him. Lord Londonderry himself, at the close of the session, prepared for a journey to Vienna, where the memorable Congress of 1822 was about to assemble; and he gave a large party at Cray on the

[1] Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. iii. p. 178. Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. p. 193, note; and *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Chron., p. 627.

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Saturday preceding the prorogation. The wine was excellent, the company in good humour, Lord Londonderry in the highest spirits.[1] On the following Tuesday the Duke of Wellington had occasion to see his colleague at his office, and thought him very low. A cabinet was held on the Wednesday for the purpose of settling Lord Londonderry's instructions for the congress; but Lord Londonderry took no part in the discussion, and was evidently 'out of sorts.' On the Friday he was so ill that concealment of his real state was no longer possible. Some anonymous letters which had been addressed to the Treasury preyed on his mind; his diseased imagination conjured up disclosures impugning his moral character; he fancied that his own friends shunned him; that his servants had ordered up his horses from Cray to London, to enable him to escape; and that he had no alternative but to fly the country. The Duke of Wellington begged Dr. Bankhead, a medical man, to see him. The king, who had an interview with him at the levée, was alarmed at his mental condition; and Lady Londonderry concluded that her husband was on the eve of a brain fever. The drastic remedies which Bankhead at once applied relieved for the moment the acuter symptoms. Lord Londonderry was well enough to drive down to his house at Cray, though he made Bankhead promise to follow him. Bankhead, anticipating the catastrophe which ultimately occurred, desired that all razors and knives might be removed from Lord Londonderry's reach. His servants, unfortunately, either overlooked or forgot a small penknife in their master's dressing-room, and with this knife the unhappy minister, early on the morning of the 12th of August, severed the carotid artery of his neck, and almost instantly expired.[2]

[1] It was, however, on this occasion that, on Arbuthnot calling out 'Lord Londonderry,' he jumped up as if in expectation of something serious. —Greville, vol. i. p. 54.

[2] Wellington's suppl. despatches, vol. i. pp. 251–259. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, p. 432.

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Effects of his death.

The death of Lord Londonderry, at the early age of fifty-one, was one of the most important events in the history of the present century. For ten years his had been the leading voice in the counsels of England. For ten years his had been the chief responsibility for the legislation which had been adopted. He had attained a position which perhaps has no parallel in the annals of his country. It was hardly an exaggeration to say that he had been the arbiter of Europe; and he was able to correspond, on terms of comparative intimacy, with emperors and kings. No training could have been worse for a constitutional minister. Lord Londonderry's 'head was turned by emperors, kings, and congresses, and he resolved that the country which he represented should play as conspicuous a part as any other in the political dramas which were acted on the Continent.'[1] His foreign policy was, in consequence, unfortunate; his domestic policy, which resembled it, was disastrous. Lord Londonderry regarded a Radical with the same feelings with which a Francis or an Alexander regarded a Carbonaro. He was prepared to suppress discontent at home with the weapons which had previously been only employed by Continental monarchs. He died. The effects of his death on the foreign policy of this country will be more properly related in a subsequent chapter. The effects of his death on the home politics of this country were revolutionary. His decease was not the mere death of a man: it gave the deathblow to a system. Tory government, in the old-fashioned sense of the phrase, ceased with Lord Londonderry. A monument had not been erected to his memory before the reaction began.

At the period of Lord Londonderry's death, however, these consequences were not perceptible. Lord Liverpool's Administration seemed to have sustained an almost irreparable loss in the death of a statesman whose cool-

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 53.

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ness, whose courage, whose good sense, and whose agreeable manners had won the devotion of his friends and the respect of his opponents. No member of the Tory party seemed capable of replacing him. In ability Canning was more than his equal; but to Canning's appointment objections could be urged which seemed almost insuperable. A section of the Tory party, indeed, desired his appointment, because they recognised that he was their only possible leader; but the bulk of the Tories regarded him as a man 'who had deserted all alliances he had ever made,'[1] and with whom it was both foolish and undignified to combine. The antipathy of the Tories was, however, slight in comparison with the dislike of the king. There seemed no reason for believing that George IV. would be more ready to admit Canning to his counsels in the autumn of 1822 than in the autumn of 1821. Nor, indeed, was it at all certain that Canning himself would be disposed to take office. At the moment at which Lord Londonderry died he was on his way to Liverpool to say farewell to his constituents.[2] He had accepted the most brilliant situation which any subject of the British crown can fill, and he might naturally hope to find ample room for his talents and his ambition as Viceroy of India, and to be spared from the constant annoyances and disappointments which had been the unvarying lot of his political life at home. The month of August passed, and Canning heard nothing from the Ministry. It was decided that the Duke of Wellington should fill Lord Londonderry's place at Vienna, but no arrangements were concluded for disposing of the seals of the Foreign Office. Canning quietly continued his preparations for leaving England and setting out for India.

George IV.'s visit to Scotland.

The delay which took place in filling up Lord Londonderry's situation was partly due to the king's absence from London when that statesman died. Two days be-

[1] Plumer Ward, vol. i. p. 347. [2] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. pp. 114–124.

fore Lord Londonderry's death the king had embarked on board his yacht in the Thames and had set sail for Leith. He arrived there on the 14th of August, and he learned the news of Lord Londonderry's death in Edinburgh. Lord Liverpool, in acquainting him with the unfortunate circumstance, had suggested that no arrangements should be made for disposing of the vacant office until after the king's return to England, and his Majesty had readily accepted a proposal which even temporarily postponed the hateful necessity of a possible application to Canning. The weeks slipped away in pleasant *fêtes*. The king had the satisfaction of displaying his shapely legs beneath a Stuart kilt, and the mortification of observing that his own well-studied toilet was made ridiculous by the portly figure of Sir William Curtis in the same garb. He had the satisfaction of inspiring his Scottish subjects with loyalty to his person, and of gratifying Sir Walter Scott by rigidly attending to all the complicated arrangements which the enthusiasm and the antiquarian knowledge of the poet had suggested to honour his Majesty's reception. But the evil day could not be indefinitely postponed. At the commencement of September the king returned to England; and, laying aside kilt and tartan, was compelled to listen to the proposals of his ministers. He had written from Scotland to beg that the arrangements respecting India might on no account be impeded, 'as it is my decision that they should remain final and unalterable;[1] and he had the mortification of ascertaining that the Cabinet were unanimous in desiring to change this 'final and unalterable decision.' The king resisted; and it required all the influence of the Duke of Wellington and the Prime Minister to induce him to give

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 195. The king sent the letter to Lord Liverpool by Peel, 'who'—so said his Majesty, five years afterwards—'went up to town with Mrs. P., *his eyes being bad, and he wearing a low green shade.*' See the account in Wellington Despatches, vol. iii. p. 633. Dickens might have envied such a combination of pathos and bathos!

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way. He conceived that Canning had offended him, and that his honour required that he should resent the offence. Wellington had the dexterity to reply that the 'honour of your Majesty consists in acts of mercy and grace.'[1] The king, who probably desired some good reason for an inevitable concession, appropriated the idea, and told Lord Liverpool that he was 'aware that the brightest ornament of his crown is the power of extending grace and favour to a subject who may have incurred his displeasure,' and that he 'therefore permits Lord Liverpool to propose Mr. Canning's readmission into the Government.'[2] The king's letter had, however, a very different effect from what his Majesty had intended. Canning was indignant at the king's presuming to talk of forgiving him, and was with difficulty dissuaded from sending a most violent reply. Happily for the future of the country, he was prevailed upon to destroy his offensive answer, and to despatch to Lord Liverpool another letter, 'full of gratitude, duty, and acquiescence.'[3]

Canning accepts the Foreign Office.

Canning accepted the post which Lord Londonderry's death had vacated. He undertook, at the same time, the lead of the House of Commons. He had not been in office a fortnight before he assumed, 'even in the presence of Lord Liverpool, the tone and authority of Premier.'[4] His Parliamentary talents were so much greater than those which any of his colleagues enjoyed, that such a result was almost inevitable. It was equally inevitable that he should desire to strengthen his position in the Cabinet by the introduction of his own friends. From the moment at which Canning accepted office other changes in the Administration seemed certain, and negotiations with this view were almost immediately undertaken. The party in the Cabinet, which was the most

[1] Wellington's suppl. despatches, vol. i. p. 276.
[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 200.
[3] Greville, vol. i. p. 58.
[4] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 385.

opposed to the new minister, was the triumvirate composed of Lord Sidmouth and Lord Sidmouth's two nominees, Bathurst and Vansittart. The personages in the Ministry who were most immediately associated with his fortunes were Robinson, the President of the Board of Trade, and Huskisson, the First Commissioner of Land Revenue. Robinson was already in the Cabinet, Huskisson had never been admitted to any important office. Canning, in the first instance, endeavoured to open the Board of Control and the Cabinet to Huskisson. He imagined that the Speaker might be persuaded to go as Governor-General to India; that Charles Wynn, who had failed as a minister, might accept the Speakership; and that the India Board, with its emoluments and its patronage, might be opened to Huskisson. The negotiation failed through the ambition of the Duke of Buckingham. The duke conceived that his dignity required that one of his own immediate friends should be in the Cabinet, and insisted, in the event of Wynn's appointment to the Speakership, on his own admission to it.[1] The Duke of Buckingham's pretensions were intolerably great; but his influence was as overbearing as his claims. The Ministry refrained from complying with his demands, but they shrank from incurring his displeasure. They were consequently compelled to find room for Canning's friends by the removal of Lord Sidmouth's. Lord Sidmouth himself had, since the previous autumn, retained his seat in the Cabinet without office. Bathurst, since the same period, had filled the sinecure situation of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He was now prevailed on to retire by the promise of a pension of 900*l.* a year to his wife, with reversion to his daughters; and Vansittart was persuaded to exchange his own situation in the Exchequer for Bathurst's office and a peerage. Robinson was appointed to the Chancellorship of

Other changes in the Ministry.

[1] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 11. Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 207.

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the Exchequer, which Vansittart's removal vacated. Huskisson was promoted to the Board of Trade, with a promise that he should ultimately be admitted to the Cabinet;[1] and Arbuthnot, a useful plodder, who had busily disharged for some years the laborious duties of Secretary to the Treasury, was gratified by promotion to Huskisson's office. Lord Liverpool probably imagined that these complicated arrangements had satisfied everyone. He soon found that in satisfying Canning he had offended other persons. Wallace, the member for Weymouth, was Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Wallace resented his supercession by Huskisson. To satisfy Wallace the Duke of Wellington's brother, Lord Maryborough, was removed from the Mint to the Buckhounds—was 'sent to the dogs,' as he himself bitterly complained—and Wallace was promoted to the Mastership of the Mint.[2]

The public generally were well satisfied with the new appointments, but they hardly realised the extent of the change which had thus been made. It was impossible to foresee that a complete revolution in foreign and domestic politics would result from the reconstruction of a Tory Cabinet. Among the grievances which formed the subject of remonstrance and complaint, both in Parliament and out of doors, nothing was more anomalous, more unfortunate, and more indefensible than the Criminal Code which disgraced the Statute Book. During the earlier years of the present century the punishment of death could legally be inflicted for more than 200 offences. It was a capital offence to pick a man's pocket; it was a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop; it was a capital offence to steal fish; it was a capital offence to rob a rabbit-warren; it was a capital offence to cut down a tree; it was a capital offence to personate a Greenwich Pensioner; it was a capital offence to harbour an offender against the Revenue Acts. It would be

The Criminal Code.

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 210. [2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 293.

possible to extend almost indefinitely the list of offences for which men could be legally hanged at the commencement of the present century. For some years the state of the law had attracted the attention of humane men. Soon after his entry into Parliament, Romilly devoted a portion of the long vacation to the subject; and, in 1808, he brought in a bill to repeal an old Act of Elizabeth which constituted stealing from the person a capital offence. Plumer, who was Solicitor-General at the time, objected that, if the Act of Elizabeth were repealed, it would be no longer possible to inflict more than seven years' transportation on a pickpocket. The grim argument, gravely propounded, was successful. Romilly's bill was recast. Transportation for life was made the punishment for the pickpocket, and the bill, thus altered, was allowed to pass. Romilly had the satisfaction of feeling that it was no longer possible to hang man or child for picking another person's pocket.

Two years afterwards, or in 1810, Romilly renewed his humane efforts. He moved for leave to introduce three bills—one to repeal an Act of William III., which made it a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop; another to repeal an Act of Anne, which made it a capital offence to steal forty shillings from a dwelling-house; a third, to repeal an Act of George II., which made it a capital offence to steal from a vessel on a navigable river. The second of these bills was thrown out by a majority of only two in a small House of sixty-eight members; the third of them was abandoned; the first was suffered to pass the House of Commons. A landlords' Parliament decided, as usual, that, if any concession were to be made, it should be extorted from the shopkeeping class. The country gentlemen might, however, have spared their apprehensions. The bill reached the House of Lords and was rejected, on the second reading, by a majority of thirty-one votes. Lord Ellenborough

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and the Lord Chancellor declared that the bill, which had been passed two years previously, had had the effect of increasing the number of pickpockets; and their arguments prevailed in the small House which attended the debate. Amongst the thirty-one peers who voted against the bill were seven prelates. The seven dignitaries of the Church who thought it consistent with the principles of their religion to hang a man for shoplifting deserve to have their names preserved. They were Manners Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury; Randolph, Bishop of London; Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury; Dampier, Bishop of Ely; Luxmore, Bishop of Hereford; Sparke, Bishop of Chester; and Porter, an Irish Bishop.

Undiscouraged by his disheartening failure, Romilly, early in 1811, re-introduced his three bills. Soon after their introduction he presented two petitions from the owners of bleaching grounds in Ireland and England, stating that their property, while lying out to be bleached, was subject to continual depredations; that, from the lenity of prosecutors and the reluctance of juries to convict, the law which punished the offence with death secured impunity for the offenders; and praying that the Acts which made these offences capital might be repealed. Soon after presenting these petitions he brought in two additional bills to give effect to their prayer. Notwithstanding the opposition of the Government, he had the satisfaction of carrying all five bills through the House of Commons. But his satisfaction was only shortlived. Three of the five bills were thrown out in the House of Lords. The two which related to stealing from bleaching grounds were suffered to pass. After three years of labour Romilly was able to reflect that it was no longer a capital offence to pick a man's pocket or to steal goods from a bleaching ground. In every other respect the horrible Criminal Code remained unaltered.

Romilly gained a slight additional success in 1812. An old Act of Elizabeth made it a capital offence for soldiers or mariners to beg without a pass from a magistrate or their commanding officer. Romilly persuaded Parliament to repeal this Act. But its repeal was not effected without one very characteristic circumstance. The bill, as it passed the Commons, recited that it was highly expedient that the Act of Elizabeth should be repealed. Lord Ellenborough was willing to repeal the Act, but he was not willing to admit that it was 'highly' expedient to do so. In deference to his suggestion the word 'highly' was struck out of the preamble, and the bill, with this amendment, was permitted to pass. No other step was taken in 1812 to reform the Criminal Code. In 1813 Romilly again introduced a bill to repeal the Act of William III. which made it a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop. The bill was again permitted to pass the Commons, but was rejected, on the second reading, in the House of Lords. Only fifteen peers took the trouble to vote for it, while twenty-six voted against it. Two princes of the blood, the Dukes of York and Cumberland, and five prelates, the Archbishop of Tuam; Cornwall, Bishop of Worcester; Luxmore, Bishop of Hereford; Jackson, Bishop of Oxford; and Law, Bishop of Chester, were among the twenty-six. Romilly was so discouraged by this defeat that he did not reintroduce his bill till the session of 1816. The bill again passed the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords without a division. The Parliament, however, which refused to make this slight alteration in the Criminal Code added another to the long list of offences punishable with death. It was made a capital offence for persons, riotously assembled, to destroy any of the machinery employed in collieries.[1]

[1] Romilly, vol. ii. pp. 229, 235, 238, 243, 252, 282, 303, 315, 325, 333, 341, 362, 383, 385, 390; vol. iii. pp. 9, 19, 78, 95, 219, 260.

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1818.

In 1818 Romilly again introduced his bill. He was able to show that, from 1805 to 1817, 655 persons had been indicted for stealing five shillings from a shop. One hundred and thirteen of these had been sentenced to death, but the sentence had not been carried into effect on a single offender. The law, in short, was an obsolete relic of a barbarous age; but the House of Lords still clung with unbending pertinacity to obsolete relics. Romilly's bill again passed the House of Commons, and was rejected without a division in the House of Lords.[1] The time was, however, arriving when the House of Lords was to realise the impracticability of retaining old laws and old customs which had no other recommendation than their age. In the good old days, which old-fashioned Tories were fond of extolling, a man had been permitted to 'appeal' a felon who had done him wrong before the Court of Common Pleas. If, for instance, a murder had been committed, the wife or next heir of the murdered man might 'appeal' the suspected murderer. The appeal had to be brought within a year and a day of the commission of the felony. The king's prerogative of pardon did not extend to an appeal case; and the appeal might actually be brought after the acquittal of the suspected person on his formal trial. The appeal was ordinarily tried before the Court of Common Pleas; but the appellee was permitted to deliver to the appellant 'wager of battel.' The issue of the appeal in that case was determined by the respective strength of appellant and appellee. The judges of the Court of Common Pleas attended in their scarlet robes in some convenient place. A baton, an ell long, and a leather shield were delivered to each of the combatants, and the parties thus armed were permitted to cudgel each other from sunrise to star-rising, or till the weaker of them uttered the disgraceful word 'Craven.'

Appeals and 'wagers of battel.'

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxvii. p. 610; vol. xxxviii. p. 1185.

1818.

No such spectacle, however, had been witnessed since the days of Elizabeth, and mankind had forgotten this custom of 'the good old times,' when they were startled by the prospect of its revival. Abraham Thornton was tried at Warwick for the murder of Mary Ashford. The jury acquitted him; but the verdict was thought unsatisfactory, and Mary's brother William 'appealed' Thornton. Thornton, being the stronger man of the two, cast down his glove in open court and demanded the wager of battel. The judges, surprised by the novel application, took time to consider it. They ultimately decided that they were bound to give the accused person the right which he claimed. It seemed actually probable that Thornton and Ashford would cudgel each other the live-long day before the judges of the Court of Common Pleas. Ashford, however, had the discretion to reflect that the strength of his muscles did not correspond with the virtue of his cause, and declined the encounter. But, though Ashford failed to screw up his courage to the sticking-point, the wager of battel had been solemnly claimed, and solemnly conceded. The Ministry could not venture to afford others the opportunity of imitating the example which had been set them, and the Attorney-General was accordingly instructed to introduce a bill to abolish appeals and wagers of battel. The bill, of course, passed. A few intemperate politicians attempted to distinguish between the appeals and the wagers of battel, and quoted the high authority of Holt to show that the right of appeal restricted the prerogative of the Crown. The Common Council of London petitioned with the same view. But Parliament properly refused to listen to these remonstrances, or to retain a solitary remnant of an obsolete system. The Attorney-General's bill passed through all its stages and became law.[1]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 415, 734; vol. xl. p. 1203. Kerr's *Blackstone*, vol. iii. p. 350; vol. iv. pp. 367–370. Hughes' *History of England*, vol. vi. p. 363.

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1818.

The death of Romilly and the views of Mackintosh.

Before the bill which was thus passed was introduced Romilly, the first champion of Criminal Law reform, died. His exertions had almost uniformly failed; but they had excited the admiration of the best of his contemporaries. While Romilly was endeavouring to reform the Criminal Code, Mackintosh was acting as a criminal judge at Bombay. In opposition to the ordinary course, he never, till the very eve of his retirement, inflicted the punishment of death upon anyone. 'Two hundred thousand men,' he said, in his last charge, 'have been governed for seven years without a capital punishment and without any increase of crimes. I have no doubt,' he went on, 'of the right of society to inflict the punishment of death on enormous crimes. I consider it as a mere modification of the right of self-defence. I do not even presume in this place to give an opinion regarding the attempt which has been made by one, whom I consider as among the wisest and most virtuous men of the present age, to render the letter of our penal law more conformable to its practice. My only object is to show that no evil has hitherto resulted from the exercise of judicial discretion in this court. I speak with less reserve, because the present sessions are likely to afford a test which will determine whether I have been actuated by weakness or by firmness.' The test was afforded. Two days after the delivery of his charge Mackintosh sentenced an English soldier to death for the cruel murder of a poor Hindoo.[1]

Experience, then, had convinced Mackintosh that the infliction of capital punishment is unnecessary except on rare occasions and for brutal crimes. The study of the French Criminal Code had confirmed this conviction. 'The crimes, not political,' so he wrote in his diary, 'punishable capitally are coining, murder of an aggravated sort, such as parricide, infanticide (to which I object), poisoning, assassination, and killing in the act of perpe-

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. pp. 34, 110, 116.

trating any other crime, and theft committed in the night by two or more persons, armed, breaking into a dwelling-house, and threatening to employ their arms. . . The Code exhibits a sad and shameful contrast to that of England. While the English Parliament rejects Romilly's bill, Napoleon is evidently solicitous to make every reform in the administration or legislature that is compatible with his own authority.' [1]

Mackintosh becomes a Criminal Law reformer.

Such were the opinions which Mackintosh had formed while executing the duties of a criminal judge in India. Suddenly and unexpectedly, after Romilly's deplorable death, he found himself the champion of Criminal Law reform. Romilly was the more earnest and industrious of the two men, but Mackintosh was the bolder and abler champion. Romilly had wasted his life in attempting to destroy a cruel system in detail; Mackintosh at once decided to attack it as a whole. There were more than two hundred offences in the Statute Book for which capital punishment might be inflicted; but there were only twenty-five offences for which anyone had suffered death during the preceding three-quarters of a century. It was obvious, therefore, that either the law which sanctioned capital punishment was wrong, or that the practice which prevented its enforcement was mistaken. The practice ought to be assimilated to the law, or the law brought into accord with the practice. There were, argued Mackintosh, three different classes of offences for which capital punishment might in theory be inflicted. The first of these classes embraced murder and similar offences against the person; the second of them arson, highway robbery, and piracy. But there was a third class of offences, 'of the most frivolous and fantastic description, against which the punishment of death is denounced by the law, though that punishment is never at present executed—such as cutting down a hop-vine or

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. pp. 56, 57.

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cutting the head of a fishpond, or being found on the highway with the face blackened. It is undoubtedly true that for the last seventy years no capital punishment has been inflicted for such offences; the statutes denouncing them are therefore needless; and I trust that I shall never live to see the day when any member of this House shall rise and maintain that a punishment avowedly needless ought to be continued.'

Mackintosh, after stating these arguments, proposed the appointment of a select committee to consider so much of the Criminal Law as relates to capital punishments. The proposal was in many respects made at an opportune moment. Lord Liverpool's Administration had been gradually sinking in popular estimation, and the majority by which it was supported was neither so large nor so docile as it had been. Lord Castlereagh did not venture to meet Mackintosh's motion with a direct negative. On the previous evening he had obtained the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state and description of gaols and into the best method of providing for the reformation, custody, and punishment of offenders. He met Mackintosh's motion by proposing that this committee should have power to report on the whole subject of the Criminal Code. He desired, in short, what Charles Wynn called 'a hodge-podge committee on Penal Laws, prisons, Botany Bay, and forgery.' It was not the first occasion on which a minister had endeavoured to strangle an inconvenient proposal by loading it with irrelevant matter. But the expedient did not save the Ministry from a damaging defeat. Mackintosh's motion was carried by 147 votes to 128, and the select committee which he had desired was accordingly appointed.[1]

Mackintosh's first victory.

This great victory—the first great victory which the reformers achieved in this country—was won on the 2nd

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 740–759, 778–846. Buckingham's *Regency*, vol. ii. p. 323.

of March, 1819. The session was not two months old, and the committee had consequently ample time for its investigations. Before Parliament was prorogued it was enabled to present an elaborate and instructive report upon the subject which had been referred to it. The committee was able to show that the graver classes of offences were not increasing in a greater ratio than the population, but that the vast and lamentable growth of crime was due to an extraordinary increase in the minor offences. The punishment of death, adjudged to these offences, had not in any way prevented their multiplication. It would have been strange indeed if it had done so, for the extreme penalty of the law had not, in these cases, been inflicted for generations. 'It has sometimes been said,' so the report went on, 'that the abolition of penal laws, which have fallen into disuse, is of little advantage to the community. Your committee consider this opinion an error. They forbear to enlarge on the striking remark of Lord Bacon, that all such laws weaken and disarm the other parts of the criminal system. The frequent occurrence of the unexecuted threat of death in a criminal code tends to rob that punishment of all its terrors, and to enervate the general authority of the Government and the laws. The multiplication of this threat in the laws of England has brought on them, and on the nation, a character of harshness and cruelty, which evidence of a mild administration of them will not entirely remove. Repeal silences the objection. Reasoning founded on a lenient exercise of authority, whatever its force may be, is not calculated to efface a general and deep impression.' These arguments led the committee to recommend the unconditional repeal of the statutes imposing capital punishment on acts which were either innocuous or which were capable of punishment as misdemeanours at the common law.[1] They induced them

[1] There were twelve distinct offences of this character, which it is

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to recommend that imprisonment or transportation should in future be the punishment of fifteen other offences, which they considered of 'a malignant and dangerous nature,' but which did not justify the forfeiture of the offender's life.[1] In addition to these recommendations, they proposed to revive Romilly's three bills repealing the punishment of death for privately stealing five shillings from a shop, forty shillings from a dwelling-house, or forty shillings from a vessel in a navigable river. They suggested also that the laws relating to forgery should be methodised and reformed. So long 'as the smaller notes of the Bank of England shall continue to constitute the principal part of the circulating medium of the kingdom the forgery of these notes may remain a capital offence; but private forgeries, and the possession of forged notes,

worth while to recapitulate, to show the trivial acts for which a person could lawfully be executed sixty years ago. They were:—

1. Egyptians remaining within the country one month.
2. Notorious thieves in Cumberland and Northumberland.
3. Being armed and disguised in any forest, park, &c.
4. Being armed and disguised in any warren.
5. Being armed and disguised in any high road, open heath, common, or down.
6. Unlawfully hunting, killing, or stealing deer.
7. Robbing warrens.
8. Stealing or taking any fish out of any river or pond.
9. Hunting in his Majesty's forests or chases.
10. Breaking down the head of a fishpond.
11. Being disguised within the Mint.
12. Injuring Westminster Bridge.

[1] These fifteen offences were:—

1. Taking away any maid, widow, or wife, for the sake of her fortune.
2. Acknowledging or procuring any fine, recovery, &c.
3. Helping to the recovery of stolen goods.
4. Maliciously killing or wounding cattle.
5. Cutting down or destroying trees.
6. Bankrupts not surrendering.
7. Bankrupts concealing or embezzling.
8. Cutting down the banks of any river.
9. Destroying any fence, lock, sluice, &c.
10. Making a false entry in a marriage register.
11. Sending threatening letters.
12. Destroying bank, &c., of Bedford Level.
13. Personating out-pensioners of Greenwich Hospital.
14. Maliciously cutting serges.
15. Harbouring offenders against the Revenue Act (24 Geo. III. c. 47).

It is a very striking proof of the character which severe legislation had imprinted on the age that Mackintosh's committee should have described these offences as malignant and dangerous. The report of the committee will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Chron., p. 336.

might be sufficiently punished either by transportation or by imprisonment, with hard labour.'

The inquiries of the committee necessarily occupied the greater portion of the session of 1819. At the commencement of 1820 George III. died. A new Parliament was almost immediately assembled; but the time of the Legislature was unfortunately occupied with the lamentable circumstances attendant on the queen's return to England. Mackintosh, however, found leisure to follow up the conclusions of the committee of the previous year. On the 9th of May he moved for leave to bring in six bills to give effect to the committee's recommendations. Three of these bills passed through Parliament. The first of the three repealed the Act which made it a capital offence to steal five shillings from a shop, but, in deference to the Chancellor's suggestion, retained the punishment of death when the goods stolen exceeded 10*l.* in value. Another of these bills, relating to the nominal offences which the committee considered deserved no punishment at all, was also passed, though the Chancellor insisted on retaining the punishment of death for persons assembled with their faces blackened and disguised. A third of the bills, relating to the graver offences, which Mackintosh's committee proposed to punish with transportation or imprisonment, also became law.[1] The three other bills, repealing the statute which imposed the penalty of death on offenders privately stealing forty shillings from a dwelling-house or from a boat on a navigable river, and which amended the laws respecting forgery, were not passed. Mackintosh re-introduced these bills early in 1821. The two former of them passed through the House of Commons, but were rejected, as they always had been, in the House of Lords.[2] The third was the subject of keen

Mackintosh's proceedings in 1820,

and in 1821.

[1] See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 227–237; vol. ii. 491–496, 524–527. [2] Ibid., vol. v. p. 1231.

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debate in the Lower House of Parliament, and never reached the Upper House.

Forgery.

Forgery on the Bank of England was one of the most prevalent crimes which disgraced this country during the earlier years of the present century. The prevalence of the crime seemed the more serious because it had unquestionably been of very recent origin. In 1797 only one person had been convicted of this offence. During the next three years the convictions for it had averaged seventeen a year; from 1801 to 1805 they had risen to the annual average of twenty-six; from 1806 to 1810 the average had increased to thirty-two; from 1811 to 1815 it had further increased to forty-seven; and from 1816 to 1820 two hundred persons had, on an average, been annually convicted of forgery on the Bank of England.[1] Before 1797, when cash payments were first suspended, 'forgery of bank-notes,' said Mackintosh, 'was the rarest of all criminal cases. In the last seven years [before 1818] not less than one hundred and one persons had suffered death for this crime. Executions for forgery now stood at the head of the list of capital punishments; they were far more numerous than executions for murder or for burglary; they were double all the executions for robbery, and much greater than executions for all other offences taken together.'[2] In 1817 the Bank spent no less than 30,000*l.* in prosecuting offenders for forgery.[3] There was an eloquence about these figures which was capable of startling the timid legislators of 1820; but there was one circumstance about them which added to their gravity. Nothing was so common as the detection of the utterer of a forged note; but nothing was so uncommon as the detection of the actual forger. It was well known that the fabricators of bank-notes

[1] The figures from which these averages are taken will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 86.

[2] Mackintosh, in House of Commons, the 13th of May, 1818.—*Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 672.

[3] Ibid., p. 673.

resided in certain localities with which the police were acquainted, but they were nevertheless permitted to carry on their trade with impunity.[1] Their trade was comparatively easy. The bank-note was of the simplest character; its imitation required little skill or capital. In 1818 Mackintosh had moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the means of more effectually preventing these forgeries. Vansittart, who probably disliked select committees originating with the Opposition, succeeded in substituting a royal commission for a committee. Some of the most eminent scientific men of the day served on the commission. The commissioners reported at the commencement of 1819. They mainly relied for the prevention of forgery on the substitution of a more elaborate note for that which was already in use. If their expectations were not disappointed, the Bank would produce 'a specimen of great ingenuity in the fabric of the paper, of great excellence in the workmanship, and of a very peculiar invention and difficult machinery in the art of printing.' Clumsy workmanship had encouraged imitators. Clever workmanship was to baffle crime.[2]

The report of the commission was published in the commencement of 1819. Mackintosh's committee must necessarily have had the commissioners' recommendations before it when it agreed to propose the reform of the laws relating to forgery. The prevalence of the offence had induced the committee to recommend the retention of death as the punishment of forgery on the Bank of England. The same reason induced Mackintosh to follow the committee's suggestions. But the concession, which Mackintosh thus made, proved fatal to his measure. The great principle, on which Romilly

[1] Report of Royal Commission on Forgery of Bank-notes.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Chron., p. 311.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. pp. 671–702. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Chron., pp. 309–314.

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originally stood, and which Mackintosh had adopted, was that severe punishments, which from their very nature could be only occasionally enforced, were less efficacious than moderate ones, which could be regularly executed. The retention of death, as a punishment for one particular forgery, was only justifiable on the ground that death, after all, was a greater deterrent than transportation or imprisonment. If the Bank of England were entitled to this protection for its notes, it was open to every private banker to urge that a similar safeguard should be afforded to his own issues. Instead of occupying the high ground, on which he had originally entrenched himself, Mackintosh was compelled to argue that it was unnecessary to punish other forgeries with death, because they were less frequent. The dilemma in which he was thus placed was so great that he was ultimately compelled to except from the bill forgeries of wills, of marriage registers, of transfers of Stock, and of country bank-notes. These exceptions, however, only increased the anomalies of the bill. Its supporters became less enthusiastic in its favour; its opponents were encouraged by the partial success which they had already obtained. The majority in favour of the measure in consequence decreased. The motion for going into committee had been carried by 118 votes to 74. The motion for the third reading was only carried by 117 votes to 111. The Ministry, who had steadily resisted the measure at every possible stage, were encouraged by the closeness of these numbers to take one division more. They divided again on the motion that 'the bill do pass,' and succeeded in rejecting it by 121 votes to 115.[1]

The rejection of this measure must have been singularly discouraging to the humane men who were occu-

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 893-973, 1094-1113. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 52-57—where the numbers are, however, incorrectly given.

pying themselves with the reform of the Criminal Code. The success of Mackintosh had, indeed, been greater than that of Romilly; but Mackintosh, like Romilly, had been doomed to see the disappointment of his just expectations. Romilly, undeterred by disappointment, would probably have introduced all his rejected measures at the commencement of the next session. Mackintosh suffered a year to elapse without doing anything at all. On the 4th of June, 1822, he proposed a resolution committing the House, 'at an early period of the next session, to take into its serious consideration the means of increasing the efficacy of the Criminal Law, by abating its undue rigour.' The proposal was met with all the influence which the Ministry could bring to bear against it. The Attorney-General moved the previous question. The Tories mustered in support of their law officer. But the arguments of the Attorney-General and the efforts of the Tories were both useless. The House of Commons had deliberately determined to modify the Criminal Code; and Mackintosh's motion was carried by 117 votes to 101.[1] Another victory had been won by the reformers; but its fruits had still to be gathered. Over and over again Romilly had carried through the House of Commons his bills for abolishing the punishment of death for privately stealing from dwelling-house or vessel. Yet a man could still be legally hanged for stealing 40*s.* from house or barge. Nothing that the House of Commons had done had shaken the determination of the House of Lords to maintain the existing law. There was no reason to suppose that either Peers or Ministry would be more pliant in 1823 than they had proved at any time during the ten preceding years.

Mackintosh re-introduces Criminal Law reform in 1822.

It is possible that, if the leaders of the Ministry had remained unchanged, the reforms of 1823 would have

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 82–87. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 790–805.

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again been doomed to postponement. Two months after Mackintosh's motion, however, Castlereagh died. By his death one of the main obstacles to the reform of the Criminal Law was removed. However opposed, on other subjects, to change, Canning was not likely to hazard defeat for the barren object of retaining a punishment in the Statute Book which no judge ever dreamed of inflicting. However bigoted he might, at that time, be on religious topics, Peel was not likely to imitate the example which Lord Sidmouth, his predecessor, had set him in the Home office. When Mackintosh introduced his proposals in 1823 he found himself still opposed by the Ministry, but the opposition had taken an entirely new form. Peel assented to the principles which Mackintosh had laid down, but objected to proceeding by resolution instead of by bill. Mackintosh's resolutions, thus opposed, were defeated; but Peel at once introduced bills to give effect to Mackintosh's principles. Five 'statutes, exempting from capital punishment about an hundred felonies,' were introduced and passed without a dissentient voice, without a whisper of dissatisfaction. The bills were carried to the Lords, and passed through all their stages unanimously, without even a debate, though Lord Eldon still 'presided over the deliberations of that assembly; and the Royal assent was given without any difficulty to measures which had been represented as mischievous and alarming.'[1] Such was one of the earliest consequences of the death of Londonderry and the reconstruction of the Liverpool Administration. The Tory party, under new guidance, had deserted its old colours, and achieved the victory which they had hitherto prevented. It was the first time in its history, in which it had the courage to pass

Peel takes up the subject in 1823.

[1] It is impossible in a work of this character to notice mere consolidating statutes, which effected little or no change in the law. But Peel's subsequent efforts in 1826 to consolidate the Criminal Law were as successful and as praiseworthy as those which he made in 1823. See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xiv. p. 1214.

over to the popular cause. It encouraged politicians to hope for further reforms.[1]

The law of marriage.

The reform of the Criminal Code was directly attributable to the praiseworthy exertions of Romilly and Mackintosh and the wise counsels of Peel. Indirectly, it was the result of the more kindly spirit and more liberal views which were gradually permeating every class of society. The same kindly instinct had led, in 1822, to the first law for the prevention of cruelty to animals.[2] The same liberal tendency led, in 1823, to the repeal of the revolting regulations for the burial of the suicide.[3] It had already induced an important reform in the law of marriage. The law of marriage was regulated by an Act which had been carried by Lord Hardwicke in the reign of George II. This Act, passed to prevent clandestine marriages, declared that any marriage by license, contracted by a minor without the previous consent of his parents or guardians, was null and void. But the law did not apply to marriages by banns. It did not even compel the residence of the parties in the parish in which the banns were asked; so that the marriage of a minor by special license was void, and the children were illegitimate; the marriage of a minor by banns was not even voidable without an Act of Parliament. It may, perhaps, be thought that the practical inconveniences which resulted from this state of the law were only slight; that minors were rarely married by banns, and that the marriages of minors by special license were duly respected by their relations. Unfortunately, however, the reverse was the case. An Eton boy, highly connected, was married to the daughter of a huntsman in a church in the Borough. Neither of the parties to the marriage had resided in the parish; yet the best autho-

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. p. 398. *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., pp. 85–88. Arnould's *Denman*, vol. i. p. 254.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 87.

[3] Ibid., 1823, Hist., p. 88. *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 550.

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rities considered the marriage indissoluble. William Peter Paget was married by banns in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn, in which both the parties were utter strangers. The accidental omission of Paget's second name alone enabled the courts to set aside the marriage. But the manner in which marriages by license were voided was horrible. In 1789 one Wattle married Miss Hathaway, a minor. He obtained the license by swearing that she was of age; he lived with his wife for twenty-seven years, had four children by her, and then instituted proceedings to annul his marriage, and succeeded in his shameless suit. One Watson married Miss Little in 1787. He had six children by her. He believed her to be of age at the time of her marriage. In 1805 she misconducted herself with another person, swore she was a minor in 1787, obtained a decree annulling her marriage, and bastardised her children. Harriet Lydiard was the natural daughter of one Whitelock and Sarah Lydiard. With the consent of her mother and guardian she married a man named Horner. Three years afterwards Horner annulled the marriage, on the ground that it had not the sanction of a guardian appointed by the Court of Chancery.[1]

The recital of these cases was sufficient to prove the impropriety of the existing law. In 1819 Phillimore, who sat for the Duke of Buckingham's borough of St. Mawes, brought in a bill to amend it. Phillimore desired to limit the period during which suits for voiding a marriage might be brought, and to place marriages by banns on the same footing as marriages by license.[2] His bill was prospective. He had the prudence to resist an amendment intended to give it a retrospective effect; and he succeeded in passing the measure through all its stages in the House of Commons.[3] The bill, however, made no

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 1464–1468.

[2] Ibid., p. 1028.

[3] Ibid., vol. xl. pp. 657–660.

further progress. It was again revived in the following year. A clause was added to it legalising retrospectively all marriages of minors where no suit was brought within six months of the passage of the bill; and, with this addition, the bill was sent up to the Lords. In the Lords it received an uncompromising opposition from the Chancellor. Lord Eldon declared that 'the bill went to take away the advantages of legitimacy from the legitimate, and to confer them on the illegitimate;' that it was a measure calculated to affect the whole 'mass of private property in the kingdom, both as to succession and possession.' These exaggerated arguments filled the Peers with apprehensions. Supported by the authority of Lord Redesdale, they ultimately led to the rejection of the bill.[1] The private property of the kingdom was given two years of grace by this decision. But two years of grace were all that Lord Eldon had secured for it. The Act of George II. had hitherto only been felt by commoners. In 1822 the Peerage experienced, for the first time, the effects of the Marriage Act. Many years before Lord Donegal had married a Miss May, a minor. Lady Donegal had borne him children. Her eldest son, Lord Belfast, was engaged to be married to Lady Harriet Butler, a daughter of Lord Glengal, when a near relative, Arthur Chichester, intimated his intention to dispute the validity of the marriage. Mr. Chichester's conduct created considerable consternation. Lord Glengal broke off his daughter's marriage with Lord Belfast, and Lord Donegal's children were threatened with illegitimacy.[2]

There was nothing in Lord Donegal's character which claims the sympathy of posterity. His father's conduct to his Ulster tenantry was one of the causes which produced the Irish rebellion of 1798. Lord Donegal's conduct to his tenantry did not, however, affect the cruel

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. p. 800; vol. ii. pp. 420, 490, 553.
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Chron., p. 236.

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position in which his grandchildren found themselves. Their misfortune supplied the Peers with a reason for the Marriage Act which had never before occurred to them. They could no longer refuse the bill; but the course which they took with it was very singular. The bill, as it reached their House, affirmed the validity of marriages which had not been declared void by any competent court, and rendered the marriages of minors voidable only during their minority, and at the instance of parents or guardians. The bill, as it left the Lords, retained the retrospective clause, and declared that there should be no such thing as nullity of marriage, but loaded the ceremony with new formalities. The amendment did not reconcile the Chancellor to the measure, who declared that it was neither more nor less than legal robbery, and called God to witness that he had used every means in his power to prevent it passing into law.[1] The formalities which the bill instituted proved so distasteful to the country that Parliament found it necessary to repeal them at the commencement of 1823, and the Lords decided to appoint a committee to frame a new bill on the subject. The bill which was thus framed compelled persons to reside in the parishes in which their banns were asked; it confirmed all previous marriages except those which had already been declared invalid by a competent court; it empowered the courts, on the suit of the parent or of the guardian of the minor, to deprive persons marrying a minor of any property which they would have otherwise obtained from their marriage. It substituted transportation for death as the punishment for false entries in the marriage register. In addition to these provisions it provided that the marriage of a minor by license, without the consent of the parent or guardian, should be voidable by suit instituted by proper parties within

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 461. *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 90. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 1128–1145.

twelve months from its solemnization. The last provision, however, did not become law. The authority of Scripture was quoted to prove that marriage was indissoluble except in the case of the adultery of one of the parties, and that no human court was justified in severing 'those whom God hath joined together.' The Peers were willing to declare that all marriages of minors should be void; but they were unwilling to admit that any marriage which was *à priori* valid could be voidable. The clause was rejected in a thin House by 28 votes to 22; and the bill, without this addition to it, became law.[1]

The Budget.

Mild and beneficial legislation was, then, the characteristic of the Parliamentary session of 1823. The substitution of Peel for Sidmouth and of Canning for Castlereagh led to a revolution in the domestic policy of the Administration. The dismissal of Vansittart and the appointment of Robinson to the Exchequer paved the way for a revolution in finance. Hume, for his economies, Vansittart, for his follies, had received the amusing nicknames of 'Penny Wise' and 'Pound Foolish.' None of the weak men who, from time to time, have filled the Exchequer deserved a damaging nickname so thoroughly as Vansittart. Robinson was not likely to imitate the extravagances of his predecessor. In 1823 the House of Commons was furnished with a simple and intelligible statement of the financial situation of the country. The estimated revenue of the year was placed at 57,000,000*l.*, the expenditure, without the Sinking Fund, at 50,000,000*l.*; the surplus at 7,000,000*l.* Robinson had converted a chronic deficit into a surplus by the simple process of ignoring the Sinking Fund. He devoted 5,000,000*l.* of his surplus to the reduction of debt; the residue of it to the remission of taxation. Ireland was relieved from the payment of assessed taxes, which had produced about 100,000*l.* a year. Shop-windows were

[1] 4 Geo. IV. c. 17 and c. 76. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. pp. 540, 664.

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exempted from taxation, and the window tax itself was reduced to one-half its previous amount. The assessed taxes, which pressed most severely on the agricultural classes, such as the tax on ponies and mules, were entirely repealed. The taxes on male servants, carriages, and horses were reduced by one-half. These various changes cost the country, it was estimated, 2,200,000*l.* a year.[1]

The Sinking Fund of 1823.

For the first time since the conclusion of the war the House of Commons had been furnished with an intelligible financial statement. After every reduction of taxation, it was estimated that the revenue of the year would exceed the expenditure by about 5,000,000*l.* Robinson decided that this surplus should constitute a new Sinking Fund. Four years before Vansittart had persuaded the House of Commons to resolve that, in order to make a progressive reduction in the debt, there

[1] The figures of the Budget were as follows:—

Revenue.

	£
Customs	10,500,000
Excise	26,000,000
Stamps	6,600,000
Post-office	1,400,000
Assessed Taxes	5,900,000
Land Tax	1,200,000
Miscellaneous	600,000
	52,200,000
Trustees of Half-pay and Pensions	4,800,000
	57,000,000
Estimated Expenditure	49,852,786
Surplus	£7,147,214

Expenditure.

	£
Charge of Debt	28,124,786
Consolidated Fund	2,050,000
Dead Weight Annuity	2,800,000
Army	7,362,000
Navy	5,442,000
Ordnance	1,380,000
Miscellaneous	1,494,000
Interest on Exchequer Bills	1,200,000
Total	£49,852,786

—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 194–234. *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., p. 107.

should be a clear surplus of income over expenditure of not less than 5,000,000*l.* During his own tenure of office, however, the intention of the House had never been fulfilled, and the surplus had never reached 3,000,000*l.* Yet the Sinking Fund had been preserved in its entirety during the whole of this period; and the Ministry had gone through the solemn farce of borrowing debt in the open market, and of purchasing Stock through the Sinking Fund Commissioners. Robinson decided on discontinuing 'the cumbrous machinery' which had thus hitherto been religiously preserved; but the time had not arrived when it would have been possible to have done away with a Sinking Fund altogether. Robinson proposed to set apart his surplus of 5,000,000*l.*, and to allow it to accumulate at compound interest in the hands of the Sinking Fund Commissioners. In principle, therefore, there was no difference between the Sinking Fund of Robinson and the Sinking Fund of Vansittart. Both of them contemplated the progressive reduction of the National Debt by the accumulation at compound interest of a sum of money set apart for the purpose. In practice, however, there was a broad distinction between the two schemes. Vansittart applied a sum of money which he had not got, and which he had no prospect of getting except by borrowing. Robinson, on the contrary, proportioned his Sinking Fund to his surplus, and devoted only the balance of income over expenditure to the reduction of debt. It was still possible to contend that the surplus revenue would have been more usefully employed in the reduction of taxation than in the liquidation of debt; but it was no longer possible to complain that money was being borrowed in the open market for the purpose of maintaining a fictitious Sinking Fund.[1]

[1] It was objected, in the course of the debates on the bill, that the real surplus was only 3,000,000*l.*, and not 5,000,000*l.*, 2,000,000*l.* of the surplus being, of course, due to the arrangement under which the 'dead weight annuity' had been constituted. For this, and the other debates on

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The Navigation Act.

Robinson's simple Budget had made finance for the first time intelligible. His new Sinking Fund had destroyed one of the most cherished traditions of the Tory party. But there was another tradition which was older and held in greater reverence than the Sinking Fund. The first Navigation Act was passed in the days of the Commonwealth. The system which it introduced was perfected after the Restoration. Nothing could theoretically be better. England was an island. She depended on her supremacy at sea for her safety, for her wealth, for her very existence. Her supremacy at sea could only be secured by an adequate supply of able-bodied seamen. A law which provided that the merchandise of Asia, Africa, and America should be only imported in English-built ships, navigated by English commanders, and manned by crews three-fourths of whom were English sailors; a law which imposed heavy duties on goods imported in foreign vessels from any European port, and which would not allow them to be imported at all in Dutch vessels, apparently placed the carrying trade of the greater part of the world in the hands of the English. This result seemed so clear, and at the same time so desirable, that the greatest thinkers uniformly concurred in extolling the wisdom of the Navigation Act. Adam Smith, while admitting that it was originally passed in consequence of a deep feeling of animosity towards the Dutch, declared that the calmest and wisest deliberation could not have produced a more far-sighted enactment. Even Mill considers that the Navigation Laws 'were probably, though economically disadvantageous, politically expedient.'[1] For one hundred and sixty years, in fact, after the Navigation Laws were passed, everyone was agreed in extolling their prudence.

the proposal, see *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 339–365, 501–509, 534, 543, 579.

[1] *Political Economy*, People's Edition, p. 555.

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The first doubt which was thrown upon this view was cast upon it by the Government of the United States. The Americans had the wit to see that, if a Navigation Act were beneficial to Great Britain, a similar law would necessarily be beneficial to themselves. They determined, in consequence, to retaliate upon the British by imposing duties on all articles imported into the States in British ships. Great embarrassment and inconvenience arose from this determination. 'Where the increased duties countervailed the freight' it became necessary to employ two sets of ships to do the work of one. An American ship carried goods from England to America, and returned to England in ballast; while an English ship carried goods from America to England, and returned to America also in ballast. This state of things convinced even protectionists that it was possible to carry the principle of the Navigation Acts a little too far. A ship which had to make every other journey in ballast could only earn half-profits for its owner. It was agreed in 1815 that American vessels should be placed on the same footing as British vessels, and that all discriminating duties imposed on goods carried in American bottoms should be repealed. Our great transatlantic rival, however, had taught the world that the Navigation Act of England was only formidable so long as it was tolerated by other countries. Portugal imitated the example of the United States, and obliged us to place Portuguese on the same footing as American vessels; and in 1821 the United Netherlands passed a law allowing a premium of 10 per cent. upon all goods imported in Dutch vessels.

Wallace's committee on foreign trade and commercial policy.

The attitude of the United States had virtually made the continuance of the Navigation Act, in its old form, impossible. Wallace, the member for Weymouth, had filled the office of Vice-President of the Board of Trade since 1818. He received so little consideration on the reconstruction of the Ministry in 1822 that he was driven

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to resign; and he was ultimately pacified by being appointed to the Mint in the place of Lord Maryborough, who 'was sent to the dogs.' He has received so little consideration from posterity that Porter describes him as President and not Vice-President of the Board of Trade in 1822; and Alison, who, in describing the legislation of 1822, copies Porter word for word, repeats the blunder. Yet Wallace is the statesman who first persuaded Parliament to modify the provisions of the Navigation Acts. He is the statesman who had the foresight to perceive that the trade of this country would flourish best if it were freed from the operation of restrictive laws. With this object he succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a committee on the foreign trade of the kingdom; and in carrying in 1822 five bills to give effect to the recommendations of this committee. The first of these bills repealed all the cumbrous and obsolete statutes on the subject which had preceded the Navigation Act of Charles II.; the second of them repealed the provisions of the Act which forbade the importation of Asian, African, and American produce into Britain except in British bottoms; and which forbade the importation of European produce into Britain except in British bottoms, or in foreign vessels, not being Dutch, sailing direct from the port of production. The third bill re-enacted the provisions which had thus been repealed, omitting the exception which the jealousy of Dutch rivalry had inserted in the original Navigation Act. The fourth bill regulated the trade between America and the West Indies and this country. The fifth bill enabled the West Indies to trade direct in British ships with any foreign nation; and opened, therefore, extensive markets to the inhabitants of the West Indies.[1]

Such were the reforms introduced by Wallace into

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. p. 708, for Wallace's own description of his measures. Cf. also vol. viii. p. 98; *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 122; and Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, p. 395.

the commercial system of Britain. Their merits were fully appreciated by the London merchants. 'There was but one opinion amongst them, and that was that, since the first establishment of the Board of Trade, all the exertions of all its former Presidents were not, when united, equal to those which had been made by the right honourable gentleman alone.'[1] Wallace, in fact, had made a reputation in his office, which ought to have secured his position or have led to his advancement. Unfortunately, however, the reconstruction of the Government, on the accession of Canning, suggested an alteration in the constitution of the Board of Trade. For the sake of providing for Huskisson, Canning had offered Charles Wynn the highest situations at the disposal of the Ministry. He had given him the refusal of the Speakership of the House of Commons and of the Governor-Generalship of India. When such prodigious offers were made for the sake of securing an adequate opening for Huskisson, a Vice-President of the Board of Trade could hardly expect to receive the consideration which his merits deserved. Robinson, the President of the Board, succeeded Vansittart; Wallace, the Vice-President, finding himself on the eve of supercession by Huskisson, resigned. The good of the public service had been sacrificed to suit the convenience of the minister, and one of the most useful of politicians had been deliberately driven from office. In one respect, indeed, the public gained as much as it had lost. In the liberality of his views, in the knowledge of commercial matters, Huskisson resembled Wallace. His appointment to the Board of Trade undoubtedly marks an important epoch in the commercial history of England. It is only fair, however, to recollect that the reforms for which Huskisson is remembered had been begun by Wallace; and that, if

Wallace's resignation.

[1] Baring, in the House of Commons. *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 104.

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Huskisson commenced the structure of free trade, the foundations had been laid by his predecessor in office.[1]

Huskisson's commercial policy.

Huskisson undertook the duties of President of the Board of Trade at a critical period. In 1815 the Government of the United States had compelled us to place their vessels on the same footing as our own by retaliating on British commerce. The Portuguese and the Dutch had followed the example of the Americans, and had consequently made the continuance of an exclusive system impracticable. In 1823 the Prussian Government raised its dues on British vessels, 'and intimated in a manner not to be mistaken that Prussia would more fully adopt the retaliatory system' if no alteration were made in British policy. In such a crisis only two alternatives were possible: 'either we must commence a commercial conflict through the instrumentality of protecting duties and prohibitions, or else we must admit other powers to a full equality and reciprocity of shipping duties.' The age in which the first of these alternatives would have been adopted was gone by. Huskisson, therefore, proposed to give the King in Council power to conclude reciprocity treaties with foreign nations; and, in return for equal privileges abroad, to admit the vessels of foreign nations into British harbours on the same terms as British merchantmen. The change was inevitable. Discriminating duties, favouring British owners, may have been advantageous as long as other countries submitted to them; they became impracticable when other nations decided on protecting their own commerce. The facts were so clear that Huskisson's remedy was adopted in a thin House by a large majority. The attitude of foreign Governments had effected the destruction of a system which had lasted for one

[1] It may be added that, thanks to Wallace, the country gained in another respect. Up to 1825 the Irish shilling had included thirteen pence. In 1825 Wallace succeeded in assimilating the currencies of the three countries. *Hansard*, vol. xiii, p. 573.

hundred and sixty years; and the first step was taken by the Legislature towards realising the prediction which the poet had boldly hazarded a century before :— 1824.

> The time shall come when, free as seas or wind,
> Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind;
> Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
> And seas but join the regions they divide.[1]

Marked improvement in the condition of the country.

The session of 1823 had been remarkable in many ways. The Criminal Code had been relieved of some of its harsher features; the marriage law had been reformed; the financial system had been simplified; the Sinking Fund had been placed on a new footing; and protection in navigation had been replaced by reciprocity. During the continuance of the session the internal condition of the country continued to improve. 'It is with the greatest satisfaction'—so ran the king's speech at the close of it—'that his Majesty is enabled to contemplate the flourishing condition of all branches of our commerce and manufactures, and the gradual abatement of those difficulties under which the agricultural interest has so long and so severely suffered.'[2] The same gratifying features continued throughout the recess. 'Trade and commerce'—so ran the king's speech at the commencement of 1824—'are extending themselves both at home and abroad. An increasing activity pervades almost every branch of manufacture. Agriculture is recovering from the depression under which it laboured.'[3] Throughout the whole of 1824 the same satisfactory appearances of continuous prosperity were visible. The king, in closing the session, had 'the greatest satisfaction in repeating' 'his congratulations upon the general and increasing prosperity of the country.'[4] 'There never was a period'—so ran

[1] Pope's *Windsor Forest*. Huskisson's account of the new law will be found in *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 795. The division: 75 votes to 15 in ibid., p. 1439.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1544.

[3] Ibid., vol. x. p. 1-2.

[4] Ibid., vol. xi. p. 1508

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the speech at the commencement of 1825—'in the history of this country when all the great interests of the nation were in so thriving a condition.'[1] Prosperity was attended with its natural consequences. 'At no former period,' said the speech in 1824, 'has there prevailed throughout all classes of the community a more cheerful spirit of order, or a more just sense of the advantages which, under the blessings of Providence, they enjoy.' 'There never was a period in the history of this country'—such was the testimony of the speech in 1825—'when a feeling of content and satisfaction was more widely diffused through all classes of the British people.' For the first time since the conclusion of the Great War the country was prosperous, and for the first time since the conclusion of the war the people were contented. The universal contentment which was the result of prosperity in 1824 and 1825 affords the best proof that the troubles of 1817 and 1819 had their origin in adversity.

The consequent expansion of trade and increase of the revenue.

The improvement in the condition of the country was reflected in the returns of trade and in the growth of the revenue. In 1822 the official value of the imports was under 30,000,000*l.*; it rose in 1823 to 34,591,264*l.*; in 1824 to 36,056,551*l.*; and in 1825 to 42,660,954*l.* The declared value of the exports amounted in 1823 to 34,589,410*l.*; it rose in 1824 to 37,600,021*l.*, and in 1825 to 38,077,330*l.*[2] In his Budget speech in 1823 Robinson had estimated a revenue of 10,500,000*l.* from the customs; he received 11,500,000*l.* from this single source. The entire revenue of the year had been estimated at 57,000,000*l.* Taxation representing upwards of 2,000,000*l.* had been repealed; yet the actual receipts amounted to 57,672,999*l.* Including the new Sinking Fund of 5,000,000*l.* the entire expenditure had only amounted to 55,962,014*l.* A substantial surplus of 1,710,985*l.* had accrued. The country had paid every

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 1.

[2] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict. ad verb.* 'Imports and Exports.'

charge upon it, had made some progress towards the redemption of its debt, and had an income which exceeded by one million and three-quarters its ordinary requirements.

The Austrian loan.

The revenue of 1823 had been augmented by an unexpected windfall. During the continuance of the war large sums of money had been advanced by Great Britain to the military potentates of the Continent for the purpose of enabling them to continue their exertions against France. In 1823 some sudden fit of honesty induced the Emperor of Austria to repay a portion of the loan which he had thus received. 'So highly honourable was this illustrious sovereign,' sneered Brougham in the House of Commons,[1] 'so remarkably correct was he in his pecuniary dealings—so singularly distinguished was he among his brother sovereigns for his exact sense of honour,' that he had 'had the common honesty to pay us two shillings and sixpence in the pound upon the money he had borrowed of us so long ago.'[2] A dividend of only two shillings and sixpence in the pound on the Austrian debt made, however, an appreciable addition to the resources of the country. It amounted to no less than two millions and a half. Three-quarters of a million of the amount were paid by Austria in 1823; the residue of about a million and three-quarters was payable in 1824. An increasing revenue was, therefore, unexpectedly augmented by a fortunate windfall. Robinson, under these circumstances, had an easy and agreeable task before him. The revenue was computed at 57,385,000*l.*; the expenditure, including the Sinking Fund, at 56,332,000*l.* There was, therefore,

The Budget of 1824.

[1] Metternich was, perhaps naturally, excessively sore at the language which was used on this occasion. 'Le nom de l'Autriche,' he wrote, 'ne peut-il plus être prononcé par eux sans que les bases de son antique et utile existence ne soient attaquées? Le sacrifice que l'Empereur a porté à la seule considération de ses relations et d'honneur et de politique envers un ancien allié, ne devait-il obtenir d'autre récompense qu'une défense dérisoire, et le ridicule jeté sur une transaction à laquelle on n'attribue d'autre valeur que celle d'un *God send?*'—*Wellington Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 250.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 358.

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an available surplus of 1,050,000*l.* to increase the surplus of 1,710,000*l.* which had already accrued during the previous year.[1]

The military and naval expenditure proposed in 1824 did not materially vary from that which had been sanctioned in 1823. But the miscellaneous expenditure, or the civil service estimates, as it would now be called, showed a very large increase. This increase was partly due to the exceptional circumstances of the year; but it afforded a new proof of the prosperity of the country. The fortunate windfall receivable from Austria suggested the possibility of incurring unusual expenditure of a temporary nature. The greater prosperity which was everywhere apparent diminished the necessity for strict economy. Seven years before, in a memorable crisis,

[1] The exact figures were as follows:—

Estimated Revenue.

	£
Customs	11,550,000
Excise	25,625,000
Stamps	6,800,000
Taxes	5,100,000
Post-office	1,460,000
Miscellaneous	730,000
Austrian Loan	1,500,000
Half-pay and Pensions	4,620,000
	57,385,000
Expenditure	56,332,924
Surplus	£1,052,076

Estimated Expenditure.

	£
Permanent Debt, Interest	28,073,196
Sinking Fund	5,134,458
Dead Weight Annuity	2,800,000
Other charges on Consolidated Fund	2,050,000
Total Consolidated Fund	38,057,654
Exchequer Bills Interest	1,050,000
Army	7,440,945
Navy	5,762,893
Ordnance	1,410,044
Miscellaneous	2,611,388
Total	£56,332,924

—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. pp. 305, 306.

Lord Liverpool's Administration had decided on applying a million of public money to the building of new churches. The repayment of the Austrian loan induced them to devote, in 1824, another half-million to the same object. The grant was not popular with the country, but it was easily carried in the House of Commons.[1] Modern politicians will regard it with little favour. But even modern politicians will have no hesitation in approving the other exceptional expenditure which was at the same time agreed to. There are few objects of which Englishmen are more proud than the noble castle on the banks of the Thames which for eight centuries has been the residence of English sovereigns. The sovereign of England has no palace in the metropolis which can be compared with what the Tuileries once were. But the sovereign of England can at least boast of a castle, within a drive of London, which in antiquity, in situation, and in magnificence excels the glories and the traditions of Versailles. Commenced by the Conqueror, rebuilt by the third Edward, improved by Elizabeth, Windsor was as old as the British monarchy. The spectator could look down from its battlements upon the chief of English rivers, and from the same vantage-ground could survey a park which, in the luxuriance of its timber, is unrivalled in the world. At a little distance on one side, nestling under the shadow of the castle, lies the venerable college at which successive generations of English worthies have been educated. Scarcely farther in another direction is the green meadow where the liberties of England were extorted from a reluctant sovereign. Few spots in England are richer in associations; but in 1824 the recollection of recent sorrow effaced the older traditions connected with the castle. It was in Windsor that George III. had passed the closing years of his long and

Windsor Castle.

[1] It was voted by 148 votes to 59. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 361. Cf. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 52.

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memorable reign. It was in Windsor that he had lived and died in solitary magnificence, his numerous afflictions tempered by only one blessing—that his mind had ceased to remember what he once had been. The frugal habits of George III. had prevented his embellishing the castle during his own rule. It would have been a cruel wrong to have embellished it in his affliction. The structure had, in consequence, fallen out of repair, and was no longer a suitable residence for the sovereign of the wealthiest country of the world. Lord Liverpool's Administration decided that it could not do better than apply a portion of their unexpected windfall to the repair and embellishment of Windsor; and they asked the Legislature to spend 300,000*l.* on this work.[1] The expenditure which was thus sanctioned was supplemented in a succeeding reign; and Windsor, improved and extended, became the pride and glory of the English nation.

The great majority of Englishmen, however, were not directly interested in the improvement of Windsor Castle. Only a small minority of the population could ever hope to see Windsor; and, however much they might desire that the head of the nation should be lodged in the manner which was suited to his rank, they could not hope themselves to witness the splendour of the court. In the same twelve months, however, in which the first grant was made for the embellishment of Windsor steps were taken to provide a complete National Library and to acquire a National Gallery. During his long reign George III. had collected a magnificent library of 65,000 volumes. He died, for all intents and purposes, without a will; and after his death some dispute arose as to the disposition of his property. The new king conceived that the late king's property descended to himself, and appropriated everything on which he

The king's library and the National Gallery.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 147.

was permitted to lay his hands. He even contemplated dispersing the noble library which his father had had the good taste and prudence to collect. The ministers and the royal family interfered to prevent a proceeding which they had the wit to see would be regarded as a scandal; and George IV., prevented from selling the books, presented the library to the British Museum.[1] The ministers applied for a grant of 40,000*l.* towards the erection of suitable rooms for its reception,[2] and the library of the British Museum, enriched by the new acquisition, became the noblest in the world. Royal personages have little difficulty in obtaining the approval of those who write the annals of their lives. George IV.'s conduct in appropriating his father's personal estate, and in desiring to disperse his father's library, ought to have been held up to the reprobation of posterity. The historian of Europe contents himself with praising the munificent gift of the splendid library;[3] and another historian speaks of it as a noble instance of royal munificence.[4]

The library of the British Museum had been enriched by the acquisition of the books of George III.; but the nation had no cause to thank the king for the grant. In the following spring the country succeeded in obtaining a more splendid acquisition than even the late king's library. John Julius Angerstein, a rich London merchant, had succeeded during a long life in collecting a noble gallery of pictures. He died in 1822, and the Government had the opportunity of purchasing the collection for the sum of 57,000*l.* Fortunately for the

[1] Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 65.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1113.

[3] Alison, vol. iii. p. 681. Greville's account is related on the authority of the Duke of York, and is evidently correct. Lord Colchester implies that the king gave the library to the public because Lady Conyngham thought the octagon room, in which the books were, would make a good reception room (vol. iii. p. 291). Almost at the same time Mr. Payne Knight bequeathed a magnificent collection of medals, &c., to the British Museum. See *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 1166.

[4] Hughes, vol. vii. p. 14. Hughes and Alison both apparently took their epithet from Robinson. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 600.

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country, the opportunity was not lost. The pictures were acquired;[1] a house was secured in Pall Mall for their reception and exhibition; and the first step was taken towards the formation of the noble gallery which has been gradually collected during the succeeding half-century. Angerstein's own collection formed an excellent nucleus for a National Gallery. It comprised paintings from all the principal Continental schools, and pictures by the best British artists. Raphael's 'Julius II.,' Titian's 'Rape of Ganymede,' Rubens' 'Holy Family,' Rembrandt's 'Woman Taken in Adultery,' Claude's 'Embarcation of the Queen of Sheba,' Hogarth's 'Marriage à-la-Mode,' and Sir Joshua Reynolds' 'Lord Heathfield' were among the treasures of British and foreign art which thus became the property of the nation. But the wisdom of the purchase was not measurable by the mere value of Angerstein's collection. The Ministry had reason to believe that 'if a National Gallery had existed in former times the liberality of individuals would long ere this have furnished it with as fine and beautiful specimens of art as can be found in any part of the world.' They had reason to hope that, if a National Gallery were formed then, the collection 'of a high-spirited individual, of acknowledged taste and judgment,' would be presented to it. The anticipations,[2] which were thus expressed, were fortunately fulfilled. Two years after the National Gallery was opened, Sir George Beaumont presented sixteen pictures to the nation. The generosity of private individuals attracts less attention than the cheap munificence of kings. The historian, who goes out of his way to apply to George IV. an epithet which was wholly inapplicable to his conduct, omits to mention the noble donation of Sir George Beaumont.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 316, and vol. xi. p. 101.

[2] Robinson, on the 23rd of February. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. p. 316.

The great majority of the people cordially approved the exceptional expenditure undertaken by the Government for the purpose of increasing the magnificence of the court, and of encouraging the literary and artistic tastes of the people. The prosperity which was everywhere prevalent justified the policy; and the fortunate windfall from the Austrian Government made it easy to give effect to it. The exceptional expenditure which was thus undertaken did not, however, absorb the whole of the surplus. The estimated revenue of the year amounted to 57,385,000*l.*; the estimated expenditure to only 56,332,924*l.*; the probable surplus to 1,052,076*l.* The prosperity of the country, moreover, made it possible to increase this surplus. In February the price of Consols had risen to 90; the old 4 per cents., redeemable at par, were quoted at about 102; and the time had, therefore, obviously arrived at which it was both possible and desirable to redeem this Stock. The old 4 per cent. annuities amounted to about 75,000,000*l.*; they involved an annual charge of about 3,000,000*l.*; but they could not be legally redeemed without six months' notice to their holders. Robinson proposed, therefore, to give all the holders of the 4 per cents. six months' notice that the Stock would be redeemed unless, within six weeks from the receipt of the notice, they desired to exchange it for a 3½ per cent. Stock.[1] In the great majority of cases the exchange was at once made, and a saving of ten shillings a year on every 100*l.* Stock, or of 375,000*l.* a year on the 75,000,000*l.*, was effected.[2]

The redemption of the 4 per cents.

A change, to which it was impossible to object, had

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 317.

[2] The 4 per cent. annuities (new and old) amounted in 1823 to 232,311,561*l.* In 1824 they only amounted to 156,091,332*l.* They had decreased in the interval by 76,000,000*l.* In 1823 the 3½ per cents. amounted to 28,192,997*l.*; in 1824 they exceeded 98,000,000*l.*; they had increased in the interval by 70,000,000*l.* These figures show the operation of Robinson's scheme. Holders possessing 70,000,000*l.* exchanged their securities; the remainder elected to be paid off. (See Returns of National Debt, session 1858, No. 443, pp. 47, 48.)

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increased the surplus from 1,052,000*l.* to 1,427,000*l.* Another change, which, a few years before, would undoubtedly have provoked very grave objections, concurrently increased it. Among the numerous devices, which previous generations had originated, for the purpose of increasing the trade of the country, the most common is the system of bounties. The statesmen who desired to encourage the manufacture of silk supposed that the easiest way of doing so was to put a tax on the importation of foreign silk, and pay a bounty on the exportation of British silk. The effect of this remarkable system was disastrous to the British nation. The price of silk was artificially increased at home; but the foreigner was enabled to purchase British silk at less than its prime cost; the manufacturer depending on the bounty, and not on the price alone, for his profit. This ludicrous system continued in force for upwards of a century, and large sums of money were annually paid by Britain in the shape of bounties. The Dutch had originally excited the especial jealousy of the British nation. Holland was England's most formidable rival on the seas, both in war and in peace. In the seventeenth century the Dutch fleet obtained for a time the undisputed mastery of the English Channel. Dutch vessels competed with English traders in every quarter of the globe. Even on the coasts of Britain Dutch fishermen captured the shoals of fish which the British had not the industry or the tackle to secure; and the British sailor remained

Abolition of bounties.

> Shamefully passive, while Batavian fleets
> Defraud us of the glittering finny swarms
> That heave our friths and crowd upon our shores.

There were two fisheries in which the Dutch, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, had obtained a virtual supremacy: the herring fishery and the whale fishery. It is said that in 1680 no less than

260 ships and 14,000 seamen were employed in the Dutch whale fishery. Fifty years afterwards, or in 1732, the British Legislature was induced to grant a bounty of 20*s.* a ton to every British vessel of more than 200 tons burthen employed in the whale fishery. The premium was raised in 1749 to 40*s.* a ton; and numerous vessels were fitted out for the purpose—as McCulloch has suggested—not of catching whales, but of catching the bounty. The real causes which had led to the growth of the trade were evident when the bounty was reduced in 1777 from 40*s.* to 30*s.* In the succeeding five years the vessels employed in the fishery decreased from 105 to 39. The bounty was restored to its old rate in 1781; it was again reduced in 1787 to 30*s.*, and in 1795 to 20*s.* a ton. Even at 20*s.* a ton the bounty cost the country nearly 50,000*l.* a year.[1]

The British herring fishery rose to importance about the middle of the eighteenth century. The country was jealous of the success which the Dutch were notoriously obtaining in the prosecution of this industry; and Thomson only gave expression to the feeling which was rapidly gaining ground when he wrote the complaint which has already been quoted. The demand for some measure of encouragement was so great that Parliament, in 1750, sanctioned the incorporation of an association called the Society of the Free British Fishery, for the purpose of carrying on the fishery. The society had a nominal capital of half a million; it enjoyed the patronage of the Prince of Wales; it was allowed its salt free of duty; and a bounty of 30*s.* a ton was granted on all decked vessels of from twenty to eighty tons burthen engaged in the fishery. All these inducements, however, could not make the undertaking a success. The enterprise failed. A new company, formed in 1786,

[1] McCulloch's *Commercial Dict.*, *ad verb.* 'Bounty' and 'Whale Fishery.' *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 320. Thomson's *Seasons*—Autumn.

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experienced almost equal ill-success; and Parliament, in 1808, disheartened by failure, adopted a new system. Seven commissioners were then appointed for the management of the fisheries. Bounties of 3*l.* a ton were paid on all vessels, from 60 to 100 tons burthen,[u] engaged in the fishery; and bounties of 2*s.* a barrel were granted on every barrel of herrings barrelled on the day on which they were caught. The barrel bounty was increased in 1815 to 4*s.*, or to one-fourth the selling price of the barrel.[1] These bounties cost the country about 70,000*l.* a year.

The bounties on the whale fishery had been granted only temporarily, and naturally expired in 1824. Robinson proposed that they should not be renewed. The herring fishery had, of late years, made rapid strides, and Robinson decided that its artificial encouragement was no longer necessary, and that the bounty might gradually be reduced, and ultimately cease. At the same time he determined on taking steps for terminating a more important bounty. The linen manufacture of the country was chiefly settled in Belfast and Dundee. Its growth had been encouraged by the same expedients as those by which the herring and whale fisheries had been promoted. Heavy bounties were paid on the exportation of linen, and the trade, by these means, had been artificially extended. The system had lasted so long that Robinson did not venture on terminating it at one blow. He only dared to propose that the bounties on the inferior kinds of linen should cease at once, and that the bounties on the higher classes of linen should be annually decreased 10 per cent.[2] Even this moderate proposal excited the most vehement opposition. The Scotch declared that the abolition of the bounties would ruin the rising town of Dundee; the Irish affirmed that it

[1] Mitchell on the Herring, p. 225. McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Herrings.'
[2] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 322.

would be attended with irreparable injury to the only flourishing and industrious part of Ireland.[1] Robinson, however, relying on the knowledge and support of his colleague, Huskisson, adhered to his policy. His proposals were accepted by the Legislature, and a deathblow was given to the old system of bounties.

Reduction of taxation.

The surplus had originally amounted to 1,052,000*l.* The reduction of the rate of interest on the old 4 per cents. had increased it to 1,427,000*l.* The abolition of bounties raised it to rather more than 1,600,000*l.* The whole of this sum could not, however, accrue during the existing year; and Robinson did not venture to do more than remit 1,062,000*l.* of taxation. The use which he made of his surplus was remarkable. Rum was one of the chief products of the West India Islands. Since the abolition of the slave trade the West India Islands had been in a depressed condition; and a decrease in the consumption of rum, and a rapid fall in the price of this article, had intensified this depression. Robinson decided to reduce the duty on rum and place it on a level with the tax on British spirits. The reduction, he estimated, would cost the revenue 150,000*l.* It inflicted another blow on the dying system of protection. The second change which Robinson proposed was of a similar character. Coals, carried to London by sea, paid a duty of 9*s.* 4*d.* a chaldron. The importation of coals to London in any other way was subject to a duty of 10*s.* a chaldron and to other restrictions. Coals, in every other part of England, paid a duty of 6*s.* a ton. Robinson decided on replacing these duties with an uniform tax of 6*s.* a ton, and to remove all other restrictions on the importation of coal into London by river or canal. The change virtually gave the metropolitan consumers an opportunity of obtaining coal on the payment of a moderate duty. It deprived the collieries of Northumberland

Rum.

Coals.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. pp. 452, 943, 1309.

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and Durham of an indefensible monopoly. If the consumption had not increased the change would have cost the revenue 200,000*l.* a year. But Robinson naturally concluded that lower prices would increase the use of coal, and consequently diminish the loss to the revenue. The net loss he placed in his Budget at only 100,000*l.* a year.[1]

Wool.

The third alteration, which Robinson made in his Budget, marked more clearly than any of the others the difference between his own views and those of his predecessor. It has already been stated in a previous chapter of this work that the trade in wool was originally the great staple trade of this country. From the restoration of Charles II. to 1825 an extraordinary course was taken for the encouragement of this trade. The exportation of wool was absolutely prohibited, the statesmen imagining that the clothiers would always be able to buy their raw material cheap, if the farmers were forbidden to dispose of their fleeces in a foreign market. But the agricultural classes naturally replied that, if they were prevented from selling their wool abroad, they ought to be concurrently protected against the importation of foreign wool. At the commencement of the present century either their arguments or the necessities of the country prevailed. A duty of 5*s.* 3*d.* per cwt. was placed on foreign wool. The duty was raised in 1813 to 6*s.* 8*d.*, and in 1819 to 56*s.*, or 6*d.* per lb. The Ministry declared that this enormous duty was imposed, not for the purposes of protection, but for the purposes of revenue. Whatever may have been the real cause of Vansittart's policy, it proved most injurious to the woollen trade. The manufacturers agitated for the removal of the tax; but their agitation was always met with the answer that, if the import duty were reduced, the prohibition on the exportation of wool must be removed. Manufac-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. 327.

turers and agriculturists gradually perceived that they would both be gainers from such a compromise. Robinson consequently found himself able in 1824 to give effect to it. He decided to reduce the duty on foreign wool from 6*d.* to 1*d.* the pound, and at the same time to sanction the exportation of British wool on a similar duty. This reversal of Vansittart's policy, he estimated, would cost the country about 350,000*l.* a year.[1] CHAP. VII. 1824.

The fourth change which Robinson made in his Budget of 1824 effected an even greater reform in the commercial policy of the country. The manufacture of silk in England was of more modern growth than the manufacture of wool. It had been promoted by the clumsy contrivances to which Parliament was in the habit of resorting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Monopolies, prohibitory duties, the actual prohibition of the importation of foreign goods, had all failed; and the weavers of Spitalfields, the original seat of the silk manufacture in England, were in greater distress than any other class in the kingdom. Yet Parliament had taken strong measures to promote the prosperity of the British weavers. The importation of foreign silk had been absolutely prohibited, and therefore a monopoly had theoretically been conceded to the British manufacturer. So strict was this monopoly that the Excise officer had a right to search a man's house or stop a man's carriage if he suspected it to contain foreign silk; and anyone, even 'the commonest ruffian in the street,'[2] might snatch a silken article from any passer-by if he suspected it to be of foreign manufacture. These rigid laws utterly failed. Their only effect was to convert smuggling into an important trade, and to necessitate the employment of a numerous and well-armed coastguard. It was impossible to prevent the importation of an article of such light- Silk.

[1] McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Wool.' *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 329.

[2] Huskisson's expression, in *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 808.

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ness and value as silk. Foreign silk was constantly worn. Hume in 1822 drew a bandana handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose with it in the House of Commons. Robinson reminded him that any gentleman present had a right to take possession of it and export it to a foreign country.[1] The absurdity of the law, which it was Hume's object to expose, could not have been emphasized more strongly than by the declaration of the minister.

In theory, however, the law had given a monoply to the British manufacturer. There seemed in consequence little or no injustice in imposing a heavy import duty on the raw material which he used. So long as he was exempt from all foreign competition the manufacturer ought evidently to have been able to recover the whole of the duty from the purchaser of his goods. But a simple duty on raw silk would not have satisfied the requirements of the legislators of the eighteenth century. Their first object was to secure the British manufacturer a monopoly of the silk trade; their second object was to induce him to obtain his raw silk from British possessions. Raw silk from the East Indies paid an import duty of 4*s.* a pound, raw silk from China and Italy a duty of 5*s.* 6*d.* a pound, and organzine[2] a duty of 14*s.* 10*d.* a pound. Robinson, with Huskisson's assistance, reversed the policy which these duties and prohibitions embodied. Instead of vainly endeavouring to keep foreign silk out of the market, he decided to admit it on an *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent. But in taking this step he gave the British

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 331.

[2] Raw silk is silk simply wound from the cocoon—one of the wound or reeled threads is known as 'singles'—two or more threads twisted together are known as 'tram.' 'Thrown' silk is composed of two, three, or more singles twisted together in a contrary direction to that in which the singles of which it is composed are twisted. The silk so twisted is known as 'organzine.' The heavy duties on organzine were first imposed in 1719, after the erection at Derby of the first British throwing mill. McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Silk.' The term 'thrown' silk, it is believed, is derived from the throstle used in throwing it.

weavers ample encouragement by largely reducing the duties on the raw material. The duty on Indian silk was reduced from 4*s.* to 3*d.*; that on Chinese and Italian silks from 5*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.*; that on organzine from 14*s.* 10*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a pound. These alterations, it was estimated, would involve a loss to the revenue of 462,000*l.* a year.[1] They did not, however, conciliate the manufacturers. Petition after petition was presented against the bill; counsel were called in and heard against it; and it was only after a series of debates that the proposal was, at length, reluctantly adopted.

The changes in this memorable Budget had, therefore, occasioned a gross loss of 1,062,000*l.* The reduction of the duties on rum, on coals, and on wool was estimated to cost the country 600,000*l.* a year; the loss from the reduction of the silk duties was placed at 462,000*l.* High duties, however, were not the only causes which were interfering with the growth of the British silk trade. The chief seat of the trade was originally in Spitalfields; and in 1773 the Spitalfields weavers persuaded the Legislature to authorise the Lord Mayor, Recorder, and aldermen of London, and the magistrates of Middlesex, Westminster, and the Liberty of the Tower to regulate the wages to be paid to the journeymen silk weavers residing within those districts; 'and at the same time to declare that masters so residing, employing weavers in other districts,' should be liable to severe penalties. An Act of 1792 extended the operation of the Spitalfields Act to 'manufactures of silk mixed with other materials;' and an Act of 1811 applied it to journeywomen as well as journeymen.[2] These Acts had a most pernicious effect on the Spitalfields manufacturers. Magistrates, totally ignorant of the conditions of the trade, were utterly incompetent to fix

The Spitalfields Act.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. pp. 333, 800–829.

[2] 13 Geo. III., c. lxviii., 32 Geo. III., c. xliv., 51 Geo. III., c. vii. *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 146.

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the remuneration of the persons who were employed in it. Masters were compelled to pay skilled and unskilled workmen the same wages. The magistrates had the folly to declare that weaving in which machinery was employed should be paid at the same rate as weaving done by hand. Every improvement in machinery was consequently discouraged, and the use of machinery became almost impracticable. If the Spitalfields Acts had been universal in their application the silk trade would probably have been driven from the country. Fortunately they were only local, and their only effect was to drive the trade from Spitalfields. 'Many works of the first consequence,' said the Spitalfields manufacturers in a petition to the House of Commons in 1823, 'have already been transferred to Norwich, Manchester, Macclesfield, Taunton, and other towns, where they are performed at from one-half to two-thirds of the price for which, under these Acts, they can be made in London, Westminster, or Middlesex. The removal of the entire manufacture from the metropolis' will be 'inevitable, if these Acts be allowed to continue much longer in force.'[1]

The petition from which this extract is taken was presented on the 9th of May, 1823. Ricardo at once rose to denounce the Spitalfields Acts; Wallace declared them 'unjust to the merchant, unjust to the manufacturer, and above all unjust to the workman;' and Huskisson announced his intention 'on the earliest possible day to submit a motion' for their repeal.[2] The promise was kept; but the announcement that the Acts were to be repealed excited an unexpected opposition. The Spitalfields weavers declared that the Acts had been exceptionally beneficial to them, and they feared that their repeal would be followed by the reduction of their wages and the increase of the poor-rates. A petition against Huskisson's bill was hastily prepared. Though no fe-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 147. [2] Ibid., p. 149.

males and no males under twenty years of age were permitted to sign it, it received within three days no less than 11,000 signatures. Fowell Buxton, the member for Weymouth, who lived and conducted his business as a brewer in Spitalfields, undertook to present their petition to the House;[1] and a large majority of the House of Commons, though in favour of the bill, wished that its progress might be delayed until the weavers themselves appreciated its merits. Huskisson, however, satisfied that the principle of his measure was sound, declined to listen to the application for delay. Counsel were heard against the bill; but a motion for its re-committal was rejected on the 9th of June by 68 votes to 60; and its third reading was carried, two days afterwards, by 53 votes to 40.[2]

The bill had passed the House of Commons; but there was no doubt of the depth of feeling which it had excited in the East of London. On the evening on which it was read a third time Palace Yard and the avenues to the House were thronged by a dense mob from Spitalfields. The members, as they passed to the House, were entreated to oppose the measure, and a rumour that the third reading was rejected was received with exultation by the crowd. The true state of the case, however, was soon known, and the crowd dispersed in dejection at the news.[3] Though, however, the weavers were dejected at the result, their opposition did not cease. They thronged the approaches to the House of Lords on the 16th of June—'a most orderly though numerous mob'[4]—and they persuaded the Peers to refer the Bill to a select committee.[5] The select committee agreed with the House of Commons in condemning the Spitalfields Acts and in recommending their repeal. But there was a large party in the House of Lords unprepared to accept the decision of the House

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 378.
[2] Ibid., pp. 818, 833.
[3] *Ann. Reg.* (1823), Chron., p. 71.
[4] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 290.
[5] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 988.

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of Commons or the recommendations of their own committee. Men like Lord Harrowby,[1] Lord Ellenborough,[2] and Lord Colchester[3] had the ingenuity to discover a new reason for retaining the Acts which economists like Ricardo, Huskisson, and Wallace had desired to repeal. The tendency of the Acts was to drive the silk trade from Spitalfields; and these wise legislators, afraid of 'another Manchester growing up near the metropolis,' thought that the Legislature should do something to counteract this tendency. A section of the Ministry had the decency to support a measure introduced by one of their colleagues; but other members of the Ministry openly opposed it. Lord Bexley, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, introduced the bill; Lord Harrowby, the President of the Council, moved its rejection. The Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, supported Lord Bexley; and the Chancellor, Lord Eldon, supported Lord Harrowby. Men accustomed to the want of discipline in the Government were amazed at these open dissensions. But the Chancellor and Lord Harrowby proved too strong for the Prime Minister and Lord Bexley. The bill was cut down from its original proportions, and the power of the magistrates to fix the rate of wages was left unrepealed. The House of Commons had no fancy for the play of 'Hamlet' with the character of the Prince of Denmark left out. They declined to assent to the Lords' amendments, and the bill was dropped.[4] The Spitalfields bill had been stopped by the amendments of the Peers; but the Lords were unable to do more than delay the passage of the Act for a year. On the 4th of May, 1824, Lord Lauderdale introduced a bill in the Upper House to carry out Huskisson's proposal. The second reading was carried on the 14th of May by 23 votes to 8; the third reading on the 21st of May, by 61 votes to 55. The bill, thus

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1530. [2] Ibid., p. 988. [3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 293.
[4] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 1546.

approved by the Lords was accepted without remark in the Commons, and passed through all its stages.[1]

The debate on the Spitalfields Bill had indirectly drawn attention to the general condition of the laws which regulated the labour of the working classes. Some persons, who agreed with Huskisson in thinking that labour should be free, disagreed with him in desiring to repeal the Spitalfields Acts as the first step towards freeing it. The Spitalfields Acts, whatever objections might be urged against them, were at any rate passed in the interests of the labouring community. The artisans, almost without exception, were in favour of them; and the demand for their repeal came from the employers. There was, however, another set of Acts—the Combination Acts, and the Act for preventing the emigration of artisans—which interfered with the freedom of labour quite as much as the Spitalfields Acts. These Acts had been passed, not in the interest of the labourers, but in the interest of the employers; they were known to operate severely against the working classes. If, then, it was argued, it were really desirable to establish free labour, the first step towards doing so should be the repeal of the Combination Acts. It was unjust and impolitic to repeal a set of statutes, which the working classes desired to retain, because they interfered with free labour, and at the same time to retain another series of statutes, which the working classes desired to get rid of, and which equally interfered with the freedom of labour.[2]

The Combination Acts.

The challenge, which was thus thrown out, was soon accepted. At the close of the session of 1823 Hume formally undertook to deal with the subject; and, at the commencement of 1824, he moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into it. The object of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xi. pp. 433, 753,793.
[2] See Ellice's speech, *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 379.

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the law, which it was Hume's desire to investigate, may be very simply stated. The Legislature had honestly desired to concentrate the manufactures of the world in Britain, and it had honestly concluded that the best means of doing so were to be found in securing the manufacturers a constant supply of cheap labour and a monopoly of skilled workmanship. With these objects it was made illegal for any body of workmen to meet, even peaceably, together for the purpose of discussing the rate of wages; it was made penal for an artisan to leave the kingdom, and the artisan who was even suspected of an intention of doing so was subjected to imprisonment. With the same objects the exportation of machinery was forbidden. These laws naturally created a good deal of irritation among the working classes, and they had not even the merit of securing the result for which they were passed. Notwithstanding their existence on the Statute Book the workmen constantly combined to raise and keep up their wages, to regulate their hours of work, and to limit the right of their masters to employ apprentices. Such combinations were often followed by strikes; the strikes were often attended with serious breaches of the peace; they necessarily occasioned loss both to the employers and employed, and were attended with serious inconvenience to the community. Prosecutions had frequently taken place under the Combination Laws. The men had been prosecuted by the masters for combining to raise their wages; the masters had been prosecuted by the men for combining to reduce the wage rate. The results of these prosecutions had, however, been very different. The law, in no instance, had been strong enough to reach the masters; but the men had been frequently imprisoned for their combinations. This unequal contest had naturally produced profound dissatisfaction. The law was regarded as grossly partial. The men felt that they 'were not protected against the

injustice of their masters, while the masters were protected from the combinations of the men.'[1]

The law which prohibited the emigration of artisans had been equally unpopular and equally inoperative. Notwithstanding the law many able and intelligent artisans had gone abroad; it was difficult, if not impossible, to prevent their doing so; and the only effect which the law had was to deter artisans who had once left the country from returning home. The law, therefore, was to all intents and purposes useless. But, useless as it was, the artisans complained of its existence in the Statute Book. They were unable to see why they should be debarred from taking their labour to the best market, 'whilst all other classes of the community are permitted to go abroad, and to take their capital with them, whenever they think proper.'[2] The principle on which the emigration of artisans had been prohibited was similar to that on which the exportation of machinery had been forbidden. It was, perhaps, more difficult to evade the latter than the former of these regulations. It was easy for a workman to leave the country, but it was obviously difficult to smuggle out of it a bulky and heavy piece of machinery. Yet, though the difficulty of smuggling machinery was great, machinery was smuggled; and, where smuggling was prevented, foreign nations were only driven to manufacture their machinery themselves instead of purchasing it from Britain. The law, therefore, in no case effected the object for which it had been enacted, and the foreign rivals of the British manufacturer were deprived neither of machinery nor of skilled workmen. Hume consequently desired to repeal the Acts which prohibited the emigration of workmen, as well as those which prevented the exportation of machinery. He

The emigration of artisans.

The exportation of machinery.

[1] Authority for these statements will be found in the report of the select committee. (*Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 811.) The concluding quotation is from Hume's speech, *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 146.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 813.

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saw no reason why Britain should not become a great manufacturer of machinery, and add one more trade to the many industries which already flourished on her soil.[1]

In one respect Hume's motion was made at an unfortunate time. Soon after the commencement of the preceding recess the man who would undoubtedly have been his ablest and most authoritative supporter in the House had passed away. An inflammation of the brain, probably attributable to hard work and acute thought, had prematurely terminated the useful career of Ricardo, the member for Portarlington. In a comparatively short life Ricardo had made himself preeminently the first authority on all questions connected with political economy. He spoke in the House of Commons on such subjects with an influence which perhaps no other economist unconnected with office has ever gained in that assembly. He had long paid special attention to the Labour Laws; and he had been instrumental in promoting the Spitalfields Bill of the previous session. His death, therefore, deprived Hume of the most valuable assistance which he could possibly have received. Only two years before Ricardo's loss would have been irreparable. The change which had been made in the character of the Government during 1823 rendered it easy to repair it in 1824. Up to the date of Huskisson's promotion and Vansittart's supercession the Opposition, on all economical questions, had held more advanced views than the Government. From the date of Huskisson's promotion the views of the Ministry on such subjects had been more advanced than those of the Opposition. Huskisson, in the present case, rose immediately after Hume; but he rose to support, not to oppose, his motion. The select committee which Hume desired was unanimously agreed to. It adopted, before the session was over, an

Ricardo's death.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. x. p. 145.

exhaustive report. Postponing the expression of any definite opinion on the policy of permitting the exportation of machinery, it recommended the entire repeal of all the laws which interfered either with the emigration of artisans or their return home; and it also recommended the repeal of the Combination Laws and the alteration of the 'Common Law, under which a peaceable meeting of masters or workmen may be prosecuted as a conspiracy.' It stated, however, that it would be necessary to pass a new enactment punishing summarily either masters or workmen 'who, by threats, intimidation, or acts of violence, should interfere with that act of freedom which ought to be allowed to each party, of employing his labour or capital in the manner he may deem most advantageous.' Bills based on these recommendations were shortly afterwards introduced into the House of Commons and became law. It is a striking proof of the revolution which had been silently effected in economical questions that these bills were passed without discussion. A whole system crumbled away without a voice being raised to defend or to extenuate it.[1]

The haste with which the bills were passed probably accounted for the extreme nature of some of their provisions. The House accepted measures which it had only imperfectly examined, and which it only partially understood. When the bills, however, became law their real nature was soon evident. Combinations increased in a way which had never been known before. The workmen imagined that the Legislature had itself encouraged them to combine; the masters, in serious alarm, combined against the workmen. In Glasgow the workmen at a single factory struck work. The masters in the same trade, dreading an attack in detail, met together and agreed that, if the men at this factory did not return to their work on the following Monday, they would dis-

Serious strike during the autumn of 1824.

[1] 5th Geo. IV., c. xcv., xcvi., xcvii.

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charge all their own men from their employment. The masters kept their word. On the Monday ten thousand working men of Glasgow were thrown out of work; and the strike was crushed by this combination among the masters.[1] The masters had reason for the alarm which they undoubtedly felt. Trades unions had struck deeper root in Scotland than in any other part of the United Kingdom. The members of the unions took an oath to execute with zeal and alacrity any task or injunction which the majority of their brethren imposed upon them; and they instanced 'the chastisement of nobs, the assassination of oppressive and tyrannical masters, and the demolition of shops,' as examples of the tasks which they might thus be enjoined to perform.[2] The Dublin unionists had, unfortunately, learned how to commit these outrages with impunity. If the curriers were offended with a master they appealed to the carpenters to avenge them. If the carpenters were offended they called on the curriers to repay their debt. Suspicion failed to fall on men of another trade; the helpless victim of the union was assassinated, and it was found impossible to detect the murderer.[3] Masters, moreover, were not the only parties whose lives were endangered by the existence of the union. If a workman did not obey the rules of the union he was made 'uncomfortable.' The elastic phrase was capable of having any meaning attached to it. A workman in Glasgow who had disregarded the wishes of the union was made 'uncomfortable' by being shot.[4]

It was obviously necessary to take some cognisance of outrages of this character. A state of things which enabled an irresponsible committee to decree the murder either of an employer or of a fellow-workman could not be permitted to continue. Early in 1825 Huskisson

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. p. 1303.
[2] Ibid., vol. xiii. p. 1402.
[3] Ibid., vol. xii. p. 1308.
[4] Ibid., vol. xiii. pp. 1402–1404.

drew attention to the subject, and proposed the appointment of a select committee to inquire into it.[1] The committee was appointed. Petition after petition was presented, both from masters and men, the masters praying for the protection of the Legislature, the men deprecating the re-enactment of the old law. But the committee felt that it was absolutely necessary to protect the masters against their workmen, the working classes against themselves. The House agreed with the recommendations of the committee. The old law was not re-enacted, but the provisions of the Act of the previous year were repealed. The Act of 1824 had legalised all combinations. The Act of 1825 made all associations illegal excepting those for the settling such amount of wages as would be a fair remuneration to the workman. Any other combination, either of men against masters, or of masters against men, or of working men against working men, was made illegal. Magistrates were given a summary jurisdiction over offenders. The bill which was thus introduced passed both Houses of Parliament without any material amendment; and the law which was thus made continued to regulate the relations of capital and labour for a period of more than forty years.[2]

1825.

Fresh Act in 1825.

The excesses which the unionists had in many cases committed, and which had led to an alteration in the Act of 1825, were partly attributable to the natural excitement of men suddenly finding themselves free from the provisions of an oppressive law. But the unionists would have been powerless if the growing prosperity, and the consequent demand for labour, had not made their services almost indispensable to their masters. Britain had never previously seen such a revival of trade as characterised the year 1824. The prosperity, said Lord Dudley, 'extended to all orders, all professions,

Extraordinary prosperity in 1824 and 1825.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 1288.
[2] Ibid., vol. xiii. pp. 1400, 1458, 1462, 1478.

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and all districts.' It was 'enhanced and invigorated by the flourishing state of all those arts which ministered to human comfort, and by those inventions by which man seemed to have obtained a mastery over Nature by the application of her own powers.'[1] 'Such is the prosperity at which the country has arrived,' said Lord Francis Leveson-Gower in the House of Commons, 'that I feel in some measure at a loss how to proceed: whether to give precedence to our agriculture, which is the main support of our country; to our manufactures, which have increased and are increasing to a most unexampled extent; or to our commerce, which distributes them to the ends of the earth, and finds daily new outlets for the distribution and new sources of national wealth and prosperity.'[2] 'Nearly all property,' wrote a contemporary chronicler, 'had risen greatly in pecuniary value, and every branch of internal industry was thriving. Agricultural distress had disappeared; the persons employed in the cotton and woollen manufactures were in full employment; the various departments of the iron trade were flourishing; on all sides new buildings were in the course of erection; and money was so abundant that men of enterprise, though without capital, found no difficulty in commanding funds for any plausible undertaking.'[3]

The evidence of prosperity, which could be traced in every portion of the kingdom, was naturally reflected in the condition of the revenue. In 1824 Robinson had anticipated a surplus of 1,050,000*l.* He had remitted taxation which had involved an ultimate loss of 1,060,000*l.* a year, and which had reduced the revenue of the year by 630,000*l.* His surplus, therefore, ought not to have exceeded 420,000*l.*; it actually amounted to 1,437,744*l.*[4] These figures made the duty of the finance minister in 1825 an easy and agreeable task.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 4.
[2] Ibid., p. 32.
[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., p. 2.
[4] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 721.

The expenditure of the year was placed at 56,001,842*l.* The revenue of the year was estimated at 56,445,370*l.*[1] The net surplus at 443,528*l.* There was, however, every reason for hoping that the surplus in future years would be very much larger. The revenue of the country was not merely increasing, but the changes which had been made in the Budget of 1824 had hardly come into operation. The abolition of the bounties on linen goods, for instance, was gradual. Robinson estimated that the surplus of 443,528*l.* in 1825 would increase to 864,000*l.* in 1826, and to 1,254,000*l.* in 1827. The large additional revenue which he thus expected in 1827 was partly attributable to a change which he proposed to make in the sugar duties. Less than two centuries ago sugar was a luxury which was enjoyed only by the

The Budget of 1825.

Sugar.

[1] The exact figures are as follows:—

Estimated Revenue.

	£
Customs	11,350,000
Excise	26,400,000
Stamps	7,100,000
Taxes	4,875,000
Post-office	1,500,000
Miscellaneous	750,000
Half-pay Trustees	4,470,370
	56,445,370
Expenditure	56,001,842
Surplus	£443,528

Expenditure.

	£
Interest of Debt.	27,233,670
Interest of Exchequer Bills	40,000
Sinking Fund	5,486,654
Dead Weight Annuity	2,800,000
Other charges on Consolidated Fund	2,050,000
Total Consolidated Fund	37,610,324
Interest of Exchequer Bills	820,000
Army	7,911,751
Navy	5,983,126
Ordnance	1,376,641
Miscellaneous	2,300,000
Total	£56,001,842

—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 725.

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very rich. The annual consumption of the entire kingdom only amounted to 22,000,000 lbs. a year. The population was not doubled in the century; but the consumption of sugar increased tenfold. More than 220,000,000 lbs. of sugar were, on an average, retained for home consumption in 1800 and 1801, and each member of the population must, therefore, have consumed some 11 lbs. of sugar a year. The rapid growth in the consumption had tempted finance ministers in want of money to place heavy import duties on the commodity. In the reign of Anne the duty only amounted to 3*s.* 5*d.* per cwt.; in 1780 it was raised to 6*s.* 8*d.*; in 1787 to 12*s.* 4*d.*; in 1791 to 15*s.*; and in 1806 to 30*s.* per cwt. If, however, the price of sugar was below 47*s.* per cwt. the Treasury was at liberty to reduce the duty to 27*s.* This arrangement was productive of fraud and loss. Large quantities of sugar were annually brought to this country and re-exported; the drawback uniformly allowed on its exportation was calculated at the highest rate of duty, 30*s.* per cwt. A merchant, therefore, was at liberty, when the price was low, to import a cargo of sugar into Britain paying on it a duty of 27*s.* per cwt., and to re-export it almost immediately afterwards and receive a drawback of 30*s.* per cwt. The merchant gained, and the public lost, 3*s.* on each cwt. of the cargo. This singular system cost the country 300,000*l.* a year. Robinson decided to reduce the duty permanently to 27*s.*, and to fix the drawback uniformly at the same amount. The additional 300,000*l.* which he thus hoped to save accounted for the greatest portion of the increase which he expected to accrue in the surplus in 1826.[1]

The change, so far as it went, was dictated by common sense. It did not constitute any attack upon the old system of protection or any advance towards the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 727. McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Sugar.' The prohibitory duties on foreign sugar were left untouched.

new system of free trade. The other changes in the Budget, however, were of a very different character. The surplus of the preceding year had amounted to more than 1,437,000*l.* The gross surplus of the three succeeding years was estimated to amount to about 2,563,000*l.* Some 4,000,000*l.* would, therefore, be available for the remission of taxation, and Robinson consequently felt himself justified in remitting taxes which produced 1,526,000*l.* a year. The poorer householders were relieved from the operation of the house tax and of the window duty. Some of the minor taxes on horses and servants were repealed, and the loss to the revenue from these changes was placed at 276,000*l.* a year.[1] The other alterations in the Budget were still more remarkable. The prosperity of the country had produced a large and unexpected demand for iron, and Robinson decided on reducing the duty from 6*l.* 10*s.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* a ton. He met 'the narrow and short-sighted policy which would say, "Let us use no iron but our own," by saying to the manufacturers in return, "Use all the iron you can get."' The welfare of the mercantile marine suggested the expediency of reducing the duty on hemp by one-half. These two reductions were estimated to cost the country 100,000*l.* a year. The duty on coffee was at the same time reduced from 1*s.* to 6*d.* the pound.[2]

Repeal of assessed taxes and other duties.

A still greater change was made in another respect. The high duties on spirits and wine had created an illicit traffic in these commodities, which all the efforts of the authorities had been unable to repress. 'We have endeavoured,' said Robinson, 'to check the progress of this mischief by the most rigorous measures. We have sur-

Smuggling.

[1] Houses assessed under 10*l.* a year paid 1*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, and were now relieved from the house tax; 171,000 persons benefited by this change. Persons occupying houses with less than seven windows were at the same time relieved from the window tax; 636,000 persons benefited by this change.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 743.

[2] West Indian coffee. The duties on East Indian and foreign coffee were reduced proportionally.

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rounded the coast with ships and guards as with a wall of brass; we have imposed penalty upon penalty, and inflicted punishment upon punishment, but all in vain.' The trade of the smuggler was pursued more actively than ever. Smuggling flourished in every quarter of the country. 'Its active instruments haunt us wherever we go; they hover around our coast, they penetrate our harbours, they traverse the interior; they invade the splendid palace of the noble and the humble cottage of the poor; they offer their temptations in every quarter, and all classes of society yield to the seduction.' In the South of England, Dutch gin and French brandy were landed on dark nights in quiet coves by armed men ready to battle with the coastguard for their property. In the North of England, Scotch whisky was smuggled across the border, and the excise officers were utterly unable to cope with the evil. Robinson decided to meet an evil which the preventive system had been unable to repress by a large reduction of taxation; and he was encouraged to do so by the success which had already attended his exertions in the same direction. Illicit distillation in Ireland and Scotland had previously been as great an evil as smuggling in England.[1] Illicit stills

[1] The story of illicit distillation in Ireland has been illustrated in Chap. II. Vol. I. of this work. For Scotland some readers will recollect Burns's complaint:—

Ye Irish lords, ye knights an' squires
Who represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

. . . . . .

Tell them whae hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aquavitæ;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

. . . . . .

existed in every parish: the people fancied that the illegal whisky had a peculiar relish; and the severest laws proved utterly incapable of remedying the evil. In 1823 Robinson decided on reducing the duties on Irish and Scotch whisky from 5*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* the gallon. Illicit distillation never recovered the blow. The amount of spirits which paid tax was at once doubled, and the revenue suffered hardly any loss from the change.[1] It was a fair presumption that the smugglers would be best encountered with the same weapons which had already checked the progress of illicit distillation. Robinson decided on making large reductions in the duties on wine, cider, and spirits. The revenue, he estimated, would lose 1,000,000*l.* a year by the changes which he thus proposed; but 1,000,000*l.* was not an excessive price to pay for the extinction of smuggling.[2]

The commercial legislation of this period.

The Budget of 1825 was the natural corollary of the Budgets of 1823 and 1824; but the financial history of the three years was very remarkable. For the first time since the conclusion of the Great War the finances of the

Paint Scotland greetin owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle:
An' d——d excisemen in a bussle
Seizin a stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

[1]

	Scotland.	Ireland.	Total.
1822	2,225,124 gallons.	2,910,483 gallons.	5,135,607 gallons.
1824	4,350,301 „	6,690,315 „	11,040,616 „

—*McCulloch, ad verb.* 'Spirits.'

[2] The changes were as follows:—The duty on French wine was reduced from 11*s.* 5½*d.* to 6*s.* a gallon; that on other wine from 7*s.* 7*d.* to 4*s.* The duty on British spirits was reduced from 10*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*; the duty on cider from 30*s.* to 15*s.* The ultimate loss to the revenue was estimated as follows:—On Wine, 230,000*l.*; spirits, 750,000*l.*; cider, 20,000*l.* Total, 1,000,000*l.* In addition to this loss, the reduction of the hemp duty cost 100,000*l.*, the reduction of the coffee duty 150,000*l.*, and the alteration in the assessed taxes 276,000*l.* a year. The whole loss, therefore, was 1,526,000*l.* a year. The duty on iron had been prohibitory, and its reduction, therefore, involved no loss.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 743.

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country had been conducted on an intelligible system. The old Sinking Fund had been abolished, and a new Sinking Fund, which the country had proved able to maintain, had been substituted for it. The funded debt had been reduced from 796,000,000*l.* to 778,000,000*l.*; the unfunded debt from 38,000,000*l.* to 31,000,000*l.* In 1823 the window-tax had been reduced by one-half; in 1825 the poorer householders had been relieved from the pressure both of house tax and window tax. The manufacturing classes had been encouraged by the reduction of the duties on silk, wool, and iron. The consuming classes had been benefited by the reduction of duties on spirits, wines, coffee, and sugar. The useless bounties on the whale and herring fisheries had been abolished; the bounties on the linen manufacture had been repealed; and the selfish policy which vainly endeavoured to concentrate the carrying trade of the world in British bottoms had been abandoned. During the same period the Labour Laws had been repealed; and the working classes had, for the first time, been legally permitted to combine for the purpose of raising the rate of wages. Such great alterations in the commercial and industrial legislation of the kingdom had never previously been attempted by any minister. Changes of such importance were not again suggested for another twenty years. The free trader looks back at the legislation of 1823, 1824, and 1825 as the first admission of the principle which it is his especial object to enforce. These changes, however, great as they were, did not effect a perfectly free trade in any article. The reform of the Navigation Laws was based on the principle of reciprocity. The burden of taxation was in many cases alleviated; it was in no case reduced altogether. Differential duties were still maintained on articles of colonial and foreign produce. Huskisson and Robinson were both, for instance, willing to give the consumer cheap sugar; but they were both of

them desirous to give the West India colonists a clear advantage in the sugar market.[1]

The Budget of 1825 was proposed on the 28th of February. The country was still enjoying an extraordinary prosperity. Every commodity was constantly rising in price; every security was continually increasing in value; and higher prices and a cheap money market were encouraging the extension of old industries and the promotion of new undertakings. The causes which produced this state of things were manifold. The severe depression of 1819 had been naturally followed by a reaction. The consuming classes could not indefinitely postpone their demand for the produce of the looms of Manchester or the commodities of Birmingham; and a

Causes of the prosperity of 1825.

[1] The other changes which Huskisson introduced into the commercial legislation of the country at this time were of the same nature. Foreign cotton goods, before 1825, could only be imported on a duty of 75*l.*, 67*l.* 10*s.*, or 50*l.* per cent., according to their quality. Huskisson proposed the admission of all foreign cotton goods on a duty of 10*l.* per cent. The duty on foreign woollens varied from 50*l.* to 67*l.* 10*s.* per cent. Huskisson reduced them to an uniform duty of 15*l.* per cent. The duty on linens fluctuated from 40*l.* to 180*l.* per cent. Huskisson simplified and reduced them, placing them all at 25*l.* per cent. The duty on paper was prohibitory; the duty on bound books amounted to 6*l.* 10*s.* and 5*l.* the cwt. Huskisson reduced the duty on paper to 'twice the amount of the excise duty;' he reduced the duties on books to 3*l.* 10*s.* and 3*l.* per cwt. respectively. The duty on glass amounted to 80*l.* per cent. Huskisson reduced it to 20*l.* per cent. The duty on glass bottles amounted to 16*s.* 2*d.* a dozen. Huskisson reduced it to 3*s.* The duty on foreign earthenware amounted to 75*l.* per cent. Huskisson reduced the duty on plain porcelain to 15*l.*, and on ornamental china to 30*l.* per cent. The duty on copper amounted to 54*l.* a ton. Huskisson reduced it to 27*l.* a ton. Zinc sold on the Continent for 20*l.* a ton; the duty upon it in this country was 28*l.*; its selling price 45*l.* a ton. Huskisson reduced the duty to 14*l.* a ton. The duty on lead was 20*l.* per cent.; Huskisson reduced it to 15*l.* The duty on manufactured articles not enumerated was 50*l.* per cent.; the duty on unmanufactured articles not enumerated was 20*l.* per cent. Huskisson reduced these duties to 20*l.* and 10*l.* per cent. respectively. These were the leading changes which Huskisson introduced into the Customs Laws. At the same time he relieved the maritime interest: 1, by repealing the quarantine duties; 2, by repealing the stamp duty payable upon the transfer either of a ship or of shares in a ship; 3, by reducing the stamp duty on debentures for the payment of drawbacks, &c.; 4, by abolishing all consular fees and paying all foreign consuls by salaries. The great speech in which Huskisson explained his elaborate scheme will be found in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. pp. 1196–1222.

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slight revival of trade indicated a return to better times. A rise in the price of corn gradually relieved the distress of the agricultural classes; and landlords, farmers, and labourers, rescued from absolute despair, began to spend a little more freely. The nation, passing from a period of despondency to hope, found itself in a position to save. Foreign governments, reckless speculators, promoters of new companies were all ready to relieve it of its savings. The British nation was interested in the struggle of the Spanish Colonies for independence. The Spanish Colonies were quite willing that the British investor should show his interest by advancing them money. South America contained the richest mines which had been discovered in the world. British capital was invited to come forward and work them. It was impossible to resist the combined attractions of an appeal which promised liberty to a continent and 20 per cent. to an investor. The attractions were all the greater because the rate of interest was steadily falling at home. A man who had placed his scanty fortune in the Navy 5 per cents. found his income in 1822 reduced by one-fifth. He had no alternative but to retrench in his establishment or to change his investment. Such an individual may, perhaps, be pardoned for lending a ready ear to the temptations which were offered him in every newspaper. He subscribed to one of the numerous companies whose prospectuses crowded the advertisement columns of the morning papers. Nothing could exceed the apparent good fortune of the shareholders in these companies. The shares were pushed up to an astounding premium. The bubble wore the most attractive hues, it attained the most extraordinary proportions. Men found their capital doubled or even quadrupled in a single day, and blessed the movement which had provided them with a short and unexpected road to wealth.[1]

[1] The price of Consols rose from 75¼ in January 1823 to 95 in

The capital which was thus subscribed naturally imparted an accelerated impulse to every commercial undertaking. The new mines wanted machinery; the new navigation companies wanted vessels. Every new company gave fresh employment to some class of the population. The demand for iron increased so rapidly that the British ironmasters were unable to comply with it. The price of pig-iron, in consequence of the demand, rose from 6*l.* to 12*l.* a ton. Other commodities besides iron were affected in a similar way. The price of cotton rose from 7½*d.* to 1*s.* 6½*d.* a lb.[1] The rise in prices continued through the whole of 1824 and the first few months of 1825. It was stimulated by the confidence which was everywhere felt. It seemed as easy to attain wealth by speculating in commodities as by speculating in shares. The profits of the speculator were almost illimitable. It was impossible to predict the dimensions which the bubble might attain, the height to which prices might be raised. Cheap money made speculation, moreover, exceptionally easy. A man with a little credit might obtain the use of large sums of money at 4 per cent. interest. It seemed mathematically demonstrable that wealth was easily attainable when money could be borrowed from one set of persons at 4 per cent. and invested with another set of persons at 10 or even 20 per. cent. interest.

The causes which terminated it.

The mania continued to rage till the end of April 1825. About the end of April the rapid rise in prices was gradually checked. Cotton, wine, and silk had been

January 1825. The joint stock companies formed in England in 1824 and in the beginning of 1825 had a nominal capital of 174,000,000*l.* The *Times* and *Morning Chronicle* of the 23rd and 24th of January, 1825, contained the prospectuses of thirty-five new companies. The reckless manner in which these shares were pushed up in the market may be seen from one or two examples. The market price of a share in the Anglo-Mexican Mine (100*l.* share, 10*l.* paid) was, on the 11th of January, 1825, 158*l.* A 400*l.* share (only 70*l.* paid) in the Real del Monte sold for 1,350*l.* The price of other shares was pushed up almost to the same extent.—See *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., pp. 2, 3; Tooke's *History of Prices*, vol. ii. p. 146.

[1] Tooke's *Hist. of Prices*, vol. ii. p. 157.

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imported in unusual quantities, and the addition to the supplies overtook the demand. The enormous mass of people who had speculated on the assumption that the rise of prices would continue suddenly found themselves confronted with a weaker market. The fall in prices naturally led to a fall in the value of shares. The joint stock companies found it necessary to call up some of their uncalled capital. Weak investors, unable to meet the call, were compelled to sell their holdings. The sale of a few shares in a rising market would have had very little significance; it had much greater effect when the market was falling. Bold investors, confident that the crisis would soon pass, raised money on the shares which they declined to sell. Country bankers found themselves assailed with an unusual demand for money. The demand on the local banks created in its turn a demand on the Bank of England. At the end of August 1824 the circulation of the Bank of England slightly exceeded 20,000,000*l.*; the bullion in its coffers amounted to eleven millions and three-quarters. At the end of February 1825 the circulation of the Bank had increased by three-quarters of a million; its bullion had decreased by three millions. Prudential considerations should have induced the Directors to restrict their business and to diminish their discounts. The Directors of the Bank, on the contrary, participating in the universal trust, increased their discounts and diminished their reserves. At the end of August 1825 the circulation of the Bank amounted to about nineteen millions four hundred thousand pounds. Its bullion had decreased to three millions six hundred thousand pounds.[1] It was obvious to the dullest intellect that the

[1] The Bank account on the three dates was as follows:—

31st of August, 1824.

Circulation	£20,132,120	Securities	£20,904,530
Deposits	9,679,810	Bullion	11,787,430
Rest	2,880,030		
Total	£32,691,960	Total	£32,691,960

position of the Bank was dangerous. Every day that passed in the autumn of 1825 increased the danger. The demand for discount increased; the country bankers, who had been tempted to lend their money on securities realisable at only a distant date, and who, on the faith of these securities, had issued their own notes, quailed before the unexpected pressure. A vague feeling of indefinite apprehension was succeeded by genuine alarm. One or two failures hastened the panic; a run commenced on the country bankers, and bank after bank was compelled to stop payment. At last, on the 5th of December, the great banking house of Sir Peter Pole & Co., in Bartholomew Lane, closed its doors. It was known that Pole & Co. kept accounts with forty-four country bankers, and it seemed impossible to predict the consequences of so stupendous a failure. The Funds fell. Lombard Street was filled with persons hastening to withdraw their deposits from their bankers, and the prevailing panic in this way increased the frightful pressure. On the day after that on which Pole & Co. had failed three other banks of high repute closed their doors. Even old men, who had recollected the crisis of 1793, were appalled at the existing disasters.

The crash.

For ten days the panic continued at its height. Weak establishments were swept away by the storm. Even solvent institutions staggered under the unexpected strain

28th of February, 1825.

Circulation	£20,753,760	Securities	£24,951,330
Deposits	10,168,780	Bullion	8,779,100
Rest	2,807,890		
Total	£33,730,430	Total	£33,730,430

31st of August, 1825.

Circulation	£19,398,840	Securities	£25,106,030
Deposits	6,410,560	Bullion	3,634,320
Rest	2,930,950		
Total	£28,740,350	Total	£28,740,350

—Tooke's *History of Prices*, vol. ii. pp. 178, 382.

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on their resources. On the eve of Christmas Day the Bank had hardly a million of treasure in its coffers. So sad a Christmas had rarely been celebrated in London. Long before it arrived the Directors of the Bank had urged on the Ministry the expediency of resorting to exceptional measures. Long before it arrived the Cabinet had been deliberating on the policy of adopting the advice which timid counsellors were urging upon them—of suspending cash payments, of issuing Exchequer bills. 'To their infinite credit,' writes the most competent authority,[1] the Cabinet declined to take either course. The Mint was desired to expedite the coinage of new sovereigns; the Bank was encouraged to issue small notes for country circulation. Some old 1*l.* notes, accidentally discovered in a box in its vaults, were issued to the public; but cash payments were not suspended, Exchequer bills were not issued. The firm refusal of the Ministry to bend to the storm probably inspired others with a little confidence. Towards the close of December the panic was stayed, and confidence was slowly restored. At the end of February the bullion in the Bank had again reached two millions and a half,[2] and the danger was evidently over. But the whole aspect of the commercial world had been changed by the violence of the storm. The most flourishing establishments had been wrecked in the panic hurricane, and the universal prosperity of 1824 had been succeeded by as widespread distress. The flood had subsided, but the country which the waters had desolated no longer smiled.

The lesson of the crisis.

The Ministry had stood firm during the storm; but the disaster had taught a lesson which it was impossible

[1] Tooke's *Hist. of Prices*, vol. ii. p. 169.

[2] The exact figures on the 28th of February, 1826, were:—

Circulation	£25,467,910	Securities	£32,918,580
Deposits	6,935,940	Bullion	2,459,510
Rest	2,974,240		
Total	£35,378,090	Total	£35,378,090

to ignore. The crisis had been obviously due to the feverish speculation which had preceded it; but the speculators had themselves been supported by the dangerous facility with which local banks, competing for custom, had advanced money on securities of every character. While the country was prosperous the steadiest firms, dazzled by the general prosperity, had failed to perceive the risk attendant on these advances. The risk became plain enough when their own paper was returned to them for redemption, and the securities on which it had been issued became either unsaleable or saleable only at a loss. The Ministry, tracing the disasters to the rash policy of the country banks, determined on the regulation of these establishments. Up to that time no establishment containing more than six partners had been allowed to open business as bankers in England or Wales. The Bank of England was the only exception to this otherwise universal rule. The Ministry decided to alter a rule which had proved of no advantage to the community, and allow the constitution of joint stock banks dependent on the capital of an indefinite number of shareholders. Since 1792 every bank had been at liberty to issue 1*l.* and 2*l.* notes. The constant loss which it sustained from the forgery of these notes had induced the Bank of England to suspend the issue of them. But the country banks had issued small notes of this description more actively than ever. In rural districts there was an almost indefinite demand for these notes, and the country bankers were, therefore, exposed to peculiar temptations to issue them. The Ministry concluded that the best method of checking the excessive circulation of paper-money was to prevent the issue of notes of a smaller value than 5*l.*, and they accordingly decided on advising Parliament to adopt this remedy.

The country bankers were naturally alarmed at this decision. One of the main sources of their profits had

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arisen from the issue of 1*l.* and 2*l.* notes, and they saw that they were about to be deprived of this profitable business. The alarm was much greater in Scotland.

The suppression of small notes.

Banking in Scotland had never been subject to the restrictions which had interfered with the constitution of joint stock banks in England. Scotch banks had, in consequence, obtained an importance which was not enjoyed by the English banks. Little towns in Scotland, which in England would have been thought incapable of supporting a bank, had frequently branch establishments of two or three Scotch banks. The paper which these banks issued was almost the only circulating medium in Scotland; and the 1*l.* notes of the Scotch bankers, greasy with age and use, were received with greater confidence than the clean and crisp paper of the Bank of England. It was suddenly whispered that the Government proposed to stop the circulation of these venerable notes. From one end of Scotland to the other a cry of indignation was raised against the proposal. The Scotch resisted the destruction of their favourite currency with the fiery zeal with which, a century before, the Irish had refused to receive 'Wood's halfpence.' Huskisson, who was regarded as the author of the proposal, was denounced in every street in Edinburgh. Melville was blamed for disregarding Scotch interests and for assenting to the measure. Every man with Scotch blood in his veins or Scotch brogue on his tongue was ready to believe that the measure would ruin Scotland. Few Scotchmen, however, had either the skill or the knowledge which would have enabled them to explain their views upon the subject. Either from ignorance or indifference, Melville had assented to the obnoxious scheme. The fifty members returned by Scotland represented, it must be recollected, Lord Melville. How was it possible for Scotland to make herself heard except through Lord Melville? The answer came from a quarter which no one could disregard. A

Indignation in Scotland.

century before Wood's halfpence had roused the spirit of the Dean of St. Patrick: a proposal to stop 1*l.* notes roused the patriotism of the 'Wizard of the North.' Wood's halfpence had suggested the 'Drapier's Letters:' Huskisson's proposal prompted the letters of 'Malachi Malagrowther.'

Sir Walter Scott.

Sir Walter Scott was entertaining company at Abbotsford when the first news of the commercial crisis of 1825 reached him. He was growing old; his health was enfeebled; those whom he loved best were showing symptoms of decay; and he was gradually giving himself the greater leisure which his noble labours had so justly earned. Some rumours soon afterwards arrived that all was not well with the great publishing firms with which he had unfortunately connected himself. Constable was on his way to London to raise money on the business. Ballantyne was waiting uneasily in Edinburgh for tidings from Constable. Sir Walter Scott had official business of his own to perform in Edinburgh. He drove there from Abbotsford—'a cold journey to colder news.' Things were not going well with Constable in London. Bankers, who refused to advance money on unexceptionable credit, would not accept even the MSS. of the 'Waverley Novels' as a security. Collapse and ruin became, under these circumstances, only a question of time. The blow could not be averted; it could hardly be delayed. It came: and the great author, who had enchanted a world of readers, who had amassed an unprecedented fortune by his works, found himself in his old age, from no fault of his own except an over-trustful heart, worth many thousand pounds less than nothing.

For the moment the good old man was stunned by the blow. He was afraid to show himself in the streets: afraid to think what others were saying of him. His fears were soon removed. The sternest critic had nothing but good to say of the author of 'Waverley.' The stun-

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ning blow quickly lost its deadening effect. Sir Walter had others besides himself to think of—his wife, ill, dying, as it proved; his youngest daughter, delicate, and nursing her dying mother; a little grandchild, helplessly ill at a distant seaside town in England; his creditors, to whom legally he owed so much, with whom he could so easily have made terms of accommodation. Animated by these considerations Scott resumed the work which he had already commenced, and, forgetting his own sorrows, threw himself into 'Woodstock.' Little progress had, however, been made with the story when the rumour spread that the Ministry was meditating an attack on Scotch currency. Scott was under obligations to the Scotch bankers for the consideration which they had shown to him during his distress. His strong Scotch prejudices were moved by what he thought an injustice to Scotland, and he probably longed for sterner work than 'Woodstock'—work which would carry him out of his own troubles, and compel him to forget his own embarrassments. These various considerations induced him for the moment to throw aside the novel, and adopt the character of 'Malachi Malagrowther,' a Scotch tradesman.

The letters of Malachi Malagrowther.

Malachi Malagrowther had no great pretensions to economical knowledge; but he had an inexhaustible fund of humour, and he was a Scotchman to the backbone. He complained that he had discovered a deliberate design on the part of England to affront Scotland; and all his fellow-countrymen believed him. He saw a confirmation of his suspicions in the suppression of the Board of Customs in Edinburgh and its consolidation with the London Board. He declared that the substitution of sovereigns for notes would fill Scotland with a new race of highwaymen. Arguments of this character would have had little weight in a grave assembly of educated politicians; but they were exactly suited to feed the flame which was burning from one

end of Scotland to the other. It was in vain that Croker, the Secretary to the Admiralty, the ablest literary man in Lord Liverpool's Administration, writing under the name of the 'Bradwardine Waverley,' endeavoured to reply to 'Malachi Malagrowther.' It was possible to answer Malachi Malagrowther's arguments, it was impossible to resist his humour. The Ministry had to abandon the intention which they had formed of extending to Scotland their scheme of suppressing small notes in England.[1] In the same three months in which the great reverse had fallen on him, and in which he had learned for the first time the fatal nature of his wife's illness, Scott had added a new leaf to his laurel crown, and had won his great political triumph. Single-handed he had encountered the Ministry, and single-handed he had beaten them.[2]

The suppression of small notes confined to England.

Sir Walter Scott had compelled the Ministry to abandon their intention to suppress small notes in Scotland; but the Cabinet proceeded with their measure for England. All the members of it were unanimous in desiring to stop the issue of small notes; but they were not equally unanimous on other points. Huskisson

[1] The circulation of small Scotch notes in England was prohibited two years afterwards by the Act of 1828. The debates on the bill will be found in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xix. 980, 1054, 1380.

[2] There is nothing more touching in the whole of Scott's life than the letter in which he reconciled himself with Croker after their sharp encounter. 'As for my affairs,' he writes, 'I can safely say that no oak ever quitted its withered leaves more easily than I have done what might be considered as great wealth. I wish to God it was as easy for me to endure impending misfortunes of a very different kind. You may have heard that Lockhart's only child is very ill, and the delicate habits of the unfortunate boy have ended in a disease of the spine, which is a hopeless calamity, and in my daughter's present situation may have consequences on her health terrible for me to anticipate. To add to this, though it needs no addition—for the poor child's voice is day and night in my ear—I have, from a consultation of physicians, a most melancholy account of my wife's health, the faithful companion of rough and smooth, weal and wo, for so many years. So if you compare me to Brutus in the harsher points of his character (Croker had quoted the "Et tu, Brute," to him), you must also allow me some of his stoical fortitude.—"No man bears sorrow better."' Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 616.

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desired to take a step towards the establishment of a bimetallic standard, by compelling the Mint to accept packets of silver to the value of 50*l.* and upwards, and by allowing the Mint receipts for these packages to circulate as currency. The Duke of Wellington had the good sense to see that Huskisson's recommendation would virtually lead to the establishment of two different standards, and that it was, therefore, inadmissible.[1] Lord Bexley, naturally a little jealous of the supercession of his own policy, thought that the speculations which had caused the crisis were partly attributable to the commercial policy of the Government.[2] The Cabinet, then, on these points held different views, but they were unanimously resolved to stop the issue of small notes, and to allow those which were already in circulation to circulate only until 1829.[3] The debate on this proposal, which was opened by Robinson, occupied two nights. The Ministry approached the contest with considerable trepidation. It was expected that the country bankers, the City merchants, and the country gentlemen would all combine against Robinson's propositions.[4] To a certain extent these apprehensions were well founded. Bankers, merchants, and country gentlemen were all prepared to oppose Robinson; but hardly any two of them were agreed as to what should be done. Some thought that Robinson's proposals would be inoperative; others that they would be mischievous; others, again, that they were premature. Some of them were in favour of a paper currency; others were opposed to it. These various opinions weakened the force of the opposition to the Government. The leading members of the Whig party had the courage to support the proposals of the Cabinet. Reinforced by Brougham and Mackintosh, the Ministry

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 98, 135.
[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 359.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 193.
[4] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 97.

obtained an easy victory over bankers, merchants, and their own habitual supporters. Robinson's proposal was carried by 222 votes to 39.[1] The result of this division virtually decided the success of the measure; and Baring, whose reputation in the House of Commons and whose position in the City had placed him at the head of the opposition to it, announced his intention of abandoning the struggle.[2]

Hudson Gurney's action.

The contest was renewed, however, in a very singular way. Hudson Gurney, the member for Newton, a partner in the great Norfolk bank of Gurney & Co., had been one of the warmest opponents of the measure of the Ministry. Gurney had persuaded himself that the suppression of the 1*l.* notes would reduce the country to a state of destitution of which the House of Commons had no conception. Robinson's resolution, however, had been adopted, and all that Gurney could hope to do was to limit its application. He accordingly endeavoured to except from it the small notes of the Bank of England. His motion was defeated by a majority of 66 votes to 7; but on the following day, when Robinson's resolution was reported, he reintroduced his proposal on the report.[3] The feeling of the House against him was so strong that he did not venture on a division. Robinson's resolution was duly reported, and the adoption of the Ministerial scheme in its integrity appeared certain. Hudson Gurney was not, however, discouraged by his failure in Parliament. He told Robinson that, if his own proposals were not accepted, he would send up half a million of Bank notes to London and insist on their exchange into sovereigns.[4] The Ministry were ready enough to meet Hudson Gurney's arguments in the House of Commons, but they were afraid of the consequences of a new drain of bullion

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 354.
[2] *Ann. Reg.* 1826, Hist., p. 18.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. pp. 356, 406.
[4] So says Greville, vol. i. p. 80; and no other explanation of Robinson's change of front has ever been offered.

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from the Bank. Three days after Hudson Gurney's amendment had been rejected without a division Robinson came down to the House and offered to compromise the matter. He was prepared to allow the Bank of England to continue the issue of small notes till the 10th of the following October. This concession on the part of the Government materially altered their original proposal. It was not accepted without much criticism. Its adoption irretrievably damaged Robinson's reputation. His measure at one moment was declared to have been precipitate and crude; at another he was denounced as a mere puppet in Huskisson's hands; and 'Prosperity' Robinson—as he was commonly nicknamed—was almost universally regarded as unequal to the responsibilities of his office.[1]

Scotch and English banking systems.

With the modification, however, which Hudson Gurney's opposition had necessitated, the small notes bill was carried through all its stages. But the small notes bill formed only one portion of the Ministerial programme. Nothing was more striking in the recent financial crisis than its effects on Scotland and England respectively. In England seven London banks and seventy country banks had closed their doors; in Scotland not a bank had failed. Prudent men naturally imagined that some cause must exist for the different results in the two countries; and there was one evident distinction which it was impossible to overlook. In England no bank having more than six partners could be legally formed. In Scotland, on the contrary, banks could be composed of an indefinite number of shareholders, and no institution had received any monopoly or especial privilege. The consequences of these laws were remarkable. In Scotland some thirty banks of large capital, with branches in every considerable town, amply supplied their clients with every requisite accommodation. In England eight

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 537. Greville, vol. i. pp. 79–81.

or nine hundred banks, in private hands, afforded far inferior conveniences to the Scotch banks. The Scotch banks had, without exception, stood firm throughout the crisis. Nearly one-tenth part of the English banks had been overwhelmed by the storm, and the credit of the remaining nine-tenths was seriously impaired. With these facts before them the Ministry naturally desired either to engraft the Scotch system on England or to enlarge the basis on which the English banks were constituted. It was obvious, however, that they could not do so without infringing the Bank charter—without, therefore, previously obtaining the consent of the Bank of England. The Bank directors, on their part, not unnaturally objected to an arrangement which interfered with the monopoly of the Bank. The Ministry had nothing to offer them, in return for their concession, but the opportunity of instituting branch establishments in the provinces. For a fortnight Lord Liverpool and Robinson, who undertook the negotiation for the Government, were unable to shake the determination of the Bank. At the end of the fortnight the directors offered to accept the proposal on condition that the new banks were not allowed within sixty-five miles of the metropolis. The Ministry assented to this compromise; a bill to give effect to it was brought into Parliament, and ultimately became law.[1]

Establishment of joint stock banks in England.

The small notes bill and the alterations in the Bank charter were both remedial measures. However efficacious they might ultimately prove in preventing the recurrence of a crisis, they could by no possibility relieve the existing distress. Everyone was complaining of the scarcity of money; it was difficult to get the best paper discounted; and the great commercial houses, which had stood firm during the recent storm, were nervously appre-

[1] For the correspondence between the Ministry and the Bank see *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 103; *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Chron., p. 57*; and Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 356. See also *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 450, &c., for the debate on the introduction of the bill.

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hensive of the immediate future. The City merchants were unanimous in their views as to the course which should be pursued. In 1793 and in 1811 the Ministry, confronted with a similar crisis, had raised money by the issue of Exchequer bills for the relief of the commercial interests. Precedent, it was urged, justified and necessity dictated the adoption of this course. The country gentlemen agreed with the merchants. It was one of the cardinal articles of their creed to follow the example of Pitt. Pitt had issued Exchequer bills in 1793. It could not, therefore, be wrong to issue Exchequer bills in 1826. The Ministry, however, had arrived at a totally different conclusion. There were already thirty millions of Exchequer bills outstanding. It was with great difficulty that they could be kept at par. Any addition to them would inevitably lead to their depreciation. The depreciated bills would be paid into the Exchequer as revenue. The revenue would, in consequence, suffer; and a new difficulty would arise. Exchequer bills, moreover, would be useless to the merchants unless they were cashed by the Bank. The intervention of the Bank was, therefore, in any case necessary. Why should not the Bank, therefore, 'take the whole affair into their own hands at once, issue their notes on the security of goods instead of issuing them on Exchequer bills, such bills being themselves issued on that security?'[1]

The Ministry urged to issue Exchequer bills.

The argument of the Ministry was excellent; but there was one weak point in it. Their reasoning rested on the assumption that the Bank would make advances on goods: the Bank positively declined to do anything of the kind. The London merchants in their distress applied to the Treasury, and the Treasury referred them to the Bank of England. They applied to the Bank, and the Bank directors referred them to the Treasury. Under

[1] See the argument, admirably stated, in a letter from Peel to the Duke of Wellington, in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 144.

these circumstances, on the 23rd of February, Wilson, one of the members for the City, announced his intention of moving, a few days afterwards, for a select committee to inquire into the distress of the commercial world. The House seemed unanimous in Wilson's favour till Canning rose. He had, perhaps, frequently spoken with more eloquence; he never spoke with more effect. He defended his colleagues and himself against the charge of indifference which had been freely brought against them; and he persisted in retaining his own views in opposition to the opinion of the majority. 'As an individual member of Parliament, he might perhaps have yielded to the urgent necessity of the case, and abandoned what he conceived to be the strict line of his duty, when assailed by the strongest sense of misery, supported with all the eloquence of distress. But, as a responsible minister of the Crown, if his judgment is not convinced of the thorough propriety of the course to be recommended, it became his duty to waive every other consideration, to persevere in his determination, and to leave to the Parliament of the country to adopt such measures as to them may seem expedient, and to place measures, which he does not think it right to sanction, in hands more capable of carrying them into execution.'[1] The threat of resignation was not expected by the country gentlemen, who had temporarily ranged themselves in opposition to the Ministry. It was not expected by the Bank directors, who had hitherto declined to make advances on goods. The country gentlemen probably thought that they had gone a little too far. The Bank directors saw the necessity of yielding. Five days after Canning's declaration in the House of Commons, on the eve of Wilson's threatened motion, Robinson was able to announce that the Bank had acquiesced in the principle of the measure which the Government had urged on them. The Bank undertook,

They refuse to issue them.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. pp. 698, 726.

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on certain conditions being conceded, to make the necessary advances;[1] the Government undertook to hold them harmless to the extent of three millions, if they purchased that amount of Exchequer bills in the open market;[2] and the crisis, which had threatened the existence of the Ministry, quietly passed away.[3]

The severity of the crisis had been subdued, and the Ministry mistook the calm which succeeded it for prosperity. 'The violence of the storm,' said Robinson, on the 13th of March, in moving the Budget, 'is over; the clouds have begun to disperse, and by the very conflict of the elements the atmosphere has to a certain degree been cleared and purified.' These Utopian views won for him some derision. Cobbett sneered at 'Prosperity' Robinson, who refused to credit the evidence of distress which was everywhere perceptible around him. But, however much some persons were disposed to sneer at the minister who persisted in contemplating the sunny side of the prospect, no one ventured to dispute the simple financial statement which he submitted to the House of Commons. The expenditure of the year was placed at 56,328,421*l.*; the revenue at 57,043,000*l*;[4] the surplus at rather more than 700,000*l.* A strange mischance had, however, already disposed of this surplus. Up to 1825 the duty on tobacco had been fixed at 4*s.*

The Budget.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 920 sq. The conditions on which the Bank made the advances were that a short Act should be introduced, enabling persons in possession of goods—being factors or agents—to pledge them with the Bank as effectually as if they were the actual owners. By the common law an agent or factor having goods in his possession could not pledge them.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., pp. 41, 42.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 38.

[3] Lord Liverpool seems to have been the chief obstacle to the issue of Exchequer bills. He thought himself personally pledged against their issue, and was bent on retiring from office if the question were carried against him. Peel thought his decision to retire wrong, but was quite clear that he could not be left to go alone. It was obvious, therefore, that the existence of the Ministry was imperilled; and this knowledge, it is thought, induced Canning to make his very decided declaration. See an interesting letter in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 143; and Croker's account of the crisis, Ibid., p. 209.

[4] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 1321.

in the pound. By an oversight one-fourth of the duty had been allowed to lapse in the July of that year. The persons interested in the tobacco trade were naturally clamorous to know whether the Ministry proposed to restore the tax to its original rate. They were temporarily reassured on learning that ministers would do nothing without the sanction of Parliament. For half a year, therefore, the duty was continued at the reduced rate. The reduction, it was found, 'had no inconsiderable effect' in diminishing smuggling. Robinson, under these circumstances, conceived that he could not make a better use of the surplus than by continuing the reduction in the tobacco duty. He calculated that his decision would entail a loss of 600,000*l.* a year, and would, therefore, almost entirely absorb his estimated surplus.[1]

A simple Budget of this character exactly suited the temper of the House; and Robinson's proposals were, in consequence, adopted. Yet there was something ludicrous in the financial arrangements of the year. A starving population was crying aloud for cheap bread; and Robinson responded by cheapening their tobacco. There were, however, a very large number of persons in Parliament who seriously desired to alleviate the existing distress by reducing the price of corn. In the session of 1825 Whitmore, the member for Bridgnorth, had drawn attention to the state of the Corn Laws; and had succeeded in eliciting from Huskisson the declaration that he would be prepared in the following session to deal with the subject.[2] Early in 1826 Lord King described the Corn Laws as 'a job of the landed interest—the most gigantic job in the whole history of misrule,' and moved a resolution pledging the House to take their revision

The Corn Laws.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. p. 1321.

[2] The debate will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 252; Huskisson's declaration in Ibid., p. 281.

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into consideration at an early period. Lord Liverpool agreed that it would be desirable to revise the Corn Laws, but declared that he had no immediate intention of doing so.[1] Lord Liverpool's declaration was not entirely satisfactory to anyone. The country gentlemen anticipated from it a fresh attack on their own interests; the free traders feared the indefinite postponement of the question. Instructed already by Brougham in the art of petitioning, Lord King, night after night, brought up petition after petition against 'the job of jobs,' and raised little debates on each fresh petition. The same course was soon imitated in the House of Commons; and, on the 18th of April, Whitmore moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the Corn Laws. Huskisson rose, immediately after Whitmore's resolution had been seconded, to deprecate its discussion. The Parliament, which had been elected in 1820, was dying of extreme old age—it had already reached its seventh session—and its immediate dissolution was, therefore, inevitable. There was, however, 'a coincidence of feeling, amounting almost to a common understanding, that there were certain questions of great magnitude, importance, and difficulty' which it was not desirable to raise in 'an expiring Parliament.' 'If there was one question more unfit than another to be entertained at the present moment, it was this relating to the Corn Laws. No question was more calculated to agitate the House, and to set afloat in the country notions which might give rise to general inconvenience.' The House would, in short, be wise to avoid entering into the question till it had more leisure at its disposal than it could at present command; and he, on his part, would undertake to deal with it in the next session of Parliament. The House jeered at the suggestion of further delay; but it adopted Huskisson's advice.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xiv. pp. 10–19.

Whitmore's motion was defeated by a large majority;[1] and the difficult question of free trade in corn was apparently postponed for another year.

The Ministry, however, were unable to adhere to the intention which Huskisson had announced. The distress which was prevalent in the manufacturing districts had already led to universal discontent. Every description of trade was dull. The imports and exports were largely reduced.[2] Thousands of working men were thrown out of employment, and thousands of others were compelled to accept lower wages. Dull trade naturally led to discontent. The dissatisfaction among the employers of labour induced an attack on Huskisson's free trade measures; the dissatisfaction among the working classes produced an outcry against machinery. The table of the House of Commons was covered with petitions against the importation of foreign silks; and the time of the House was occupied for two long nights in debating their prayer. The Ministry, however, successfully defended their measures of the previous year. Huskisson delivered a masterly speech in favour of free trade; Canning made a warm and brilliant defence of Huskisson. The most influential members of the Opposition supported, or abstained from opposing, the Ministry; and a large majority ultimately adhered to the policy of free trade.[3] The employers had been successfully resisted. It proved less easy to deal with the workpeople. In the last week of April a large number of weavers, rudely armed with staves and scythes, assembled on some high land in the vicinity of Blackburn, and commenced destroying the machinery at outlying mills. Gathering confidence as they advanced,

Dissatisfaction,

and disturbances.

[1] By 250 votes to 81.—*Hansard*, vol. xv. p. 370. The debates on Lord King's petition will be found scattered through vol. xiv.

[2] The imports, from 42,660,954*l.* in 1825 to 36,174,350*l.* in 1826; the exports, from 38,077,330*l.* to 30,847,528*l.* McCulloch, *ad verb.* 'Imports and Exports.'

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiv. pp. 733–859.

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and continually increasing in strength, they entered Blackburn, held in check the few troops who were hastily collected to preserve order, and continued the work of destruction which they had set themselves. On the next day the riotous proceedings commenced in Manchester. Mills were burned, machinery was destroyed, and for a short time the great city was in possession of a mob. Four days of continual disturbance convinced the authorities that decisive measures were necessary. Large bodies of troops were collected; they were allowed to fire on the people, and the riot was checked by these measures. But disorder continued to recur throughout the summer. More than a thousand power-looms were destroyed, and the county was subjected to an expense of some 20,000*l.* as compensation for the destruction.[1]

The Ministry compelled to deal with the Corn Laws.

These disturbances compelled the Ministry to reconsider their policy. They could no longer ignore with safety the condition of the working classes. The weavers of Manchester directly attributed their distress to the operation of the Corn Laws. Whether they were right or no, the Ministry could not leave their complaints unredressed on the eve of a general election. On the 1st of May, a fortnight after the defeat of Whitmore's motion, Lord Liverpool intimated that Parliament ought not to separate without taking some means of increasing the supply of corn. Some hundreds of thousands of quarters of corn were bonded in Liverpool and in other ports, which, under the existing law, could not be thrown into the market. Lord Liverpool considered that this corn might at once be released, and that the Executive Government might be empowered to admit a further supply of foreign corn. On the same evening Canning made a similar announcement in the House of Commons, and undertook to make a definite proposal on the subject on

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Chron., pp. 63, 70, 111, 128.

the following day.[1] The proposal was not adopted without serious opposition. Lethbridge, the usual champion of the agricultural interest, met the proposition at the outset with a motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the causes of the existing distress.[2] Lethbridge's motion occupied the greater portion of a long sitting. It was ultimately rejected by a large majority, and the House agreed to admit bonded corn into the home market on payment of a 12*s.* duty.[3]

The Ministry authorised to admit foreign corn.

The House had adopted the first of the two proposals of the Ministry. But the country gentlemen met the second with a much sharper opposition. Under the existing law the ports could under no circumstances be opened before the 15th of August. The averages of the preceding quarter, taken on the 14th of May, regulated the policy of the succeeding three months; and, whatever the prospects of the coming harvest might prove, whatever the price of corn might be, the country would have patiently to wait till the middle of August for any remedy. In 1818 'a fatal surplus' of 2*d.* in the pound in the averages had allowed the importation of foreign wheat during the entire summer,[4] and had in consequence effected a considerable reduction in the price of corn. It was possible that the exact reverse might happen in 1826, and that the low average in May or a low average in August might prevent the importation of corn, either through the summer or through the autumn, long after the price of wheat exceeded 80*s.* a quarter. The existing law rendered the country constantly liable to such a result. But, in ordinary seasons, Government and the Legislature deliberately faced the inconveniences attendant upon it. It was, however, one thing to contemplate the existence

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xv. pp. 746, 764.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xv. p. 791.

[3] Ibid., pp. 828, 830. Lethbridge was beaten by 214 votes to 82.

[4] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 81, and vol. iii. p. 63.

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of the high price of corn for a few weeks, when the labouring classes were fully employed; it was a very different thing to face such a contingency when the industrial classes were unable to find work. Corn was already rising steadily in price; it was too early to predict the yield of the harvest; and ministers shrank, accordingly, from the responsibility of parting from the Legislature without providing for the possibility of famine.

Something, indeed, had been done already. The admission into the markets of the corn already in bond was undoubtedly beneficial. But the whole amount of corn in bond did not exceed 300,000 quarters, and the quantity was not sufficient to have any great effect on prices. Ministers, therefore, desired to supplement the admission of the bonded corn with a discretionary power, enabling them to sanction the import of foreign corn. They originally intended that no such sanction should be given unless the price of wheat exceeded 65*s.* a quarter, and that no corn should be admitted without the payment of a heavy duty. But the strong opposition of the country gentlemen induced them to modify this portion of their proposal; and they ultimately decided to make no mention either of duty or price, and simply to sanction the import of a limited quantity—500,000 quarters—of foreign corn. The proposal, thus amended, proved a little less offensive to the country gentlemen. In its original shape it had looked too like a new corn law. In its amended form it was adopted as an inevitable expedient in a temporary crisis. But its adoption only took place after vigorous debate. The resolution, pledging the House to a bill, was only carried after two nights' discussion.[1] The bill, which was founded on the resolution, was resolutely contested at almost every stage. The

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xv. pp. 918, 971, 1004.

struggle was renewed in the House of Lords, and the measure was not finally passed till the end of May.[1]

1826.

The long contest was hardly over when Parliament was dissolved. The country was thrown into all the turmoil of a general election. The electors had much to reflect upon in the past history of the previous years; but there were two subjects immediately before them which exceeded all others in interest and importance. The great question which was disturbing the minds of men was the advisability of relieving the Roman Catholics from the disabilities under which they laboured. Its history will be fully related in another chapter. It is sufficient in this place to state that differences upon it had already brought the Government to the verge of ruin, and that the anti-Catholic[2] members of the Cabinet were as much opposed to their Catholic colleagues as to their regular opponents. In 1825 everyone had expected that the general election would have been fought on the Catholic question alone. The events of 1826 had, however, given new importance to the subject of the Corn Laws. It was felt that the provisional arrangement, which the Ministry had just made, had struck a fatal blow to the existing system; and protectionists and free traders were united, at least, in agreeing that something should be done.

The general election of 1826.

Huskisson had made up his mind that the trade in corn should be freed from all unnecessary restraints; and, amidst the excitement of a contested election, he took his Liverpool constituents into confidence. Those of his colleagues who were opposed to the novel doctrines which he favoured were staggered at his statements, and one more cause of open difference arose between the two sections

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xv. pp. 1053, 1122, 1135, 1139, 1366.

[2] These epithets are used here in the sense in which they were used in 1826. Persons in favour of emancipation were classed as Catholic statesmen; persons opposed to it, as anti-Catholic.

CHAP. VII. 1826.

of which the Cabinet was composed.[1] If, however, the Tory section of the Cabinet had reason to complain of Huskisson's premature and unwarrantable statement, the Liberal members of the Ministry had at least equal grounds for objecting to the conduct of their Tory colleagues. Ever since 1811 Lord Palmerston had been member for the University of Cambridge. Ever since the autumn of 1809 he had discharged the duties of Secretary at War. His rare industry, his unassuming manners, his excellent judgment, and his admirable temper had made him a universal favourite, and nothing but his own diffidence had interfered with his rapid advancement. Lord Palmerston had a right to expect that every exertion would be used by his party to secure his return for Cambridge. He had the mortification to find that every exertion was made to defeat him. Goulburn, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Copley, who had commenced his remarkable political career as Attorney-General, did their utmost to oust him and his colleague Bankes from their seats. From the autumn of 1825 to the summer of 1826 the candidates were engaged in an incessant canvass; and the Tories forgot all they owed to the Secretary at War in their bitter intolerance for his sympathy with the Roman Catholics. Even members of the Cabinet were not ashamed to take part in the unnatural contest. Lord Liverpool, indeed, stood aloof; the Duke of Wellington and Peel condemned the cabal; but the Chancellor, Lord Bathurst, and other members of the Administration openly aided the discreditable attempt of the Attorney-General and Irish Secretary to wrest a seat from the Secretary at War. The cabal failed. Copley was, indeed, returned at the head of the poll; but the Whigs rallied in Palmerston's support, and secured his election. Contests of this description, however, leave their traces behind them long after their immediate incidents are forgotten. The Cam-

[1] See Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 342.

bridge election added one more to the many sources of difference which distracted the Ministry, and alienated the most promising of its younger members from 'the stupid old Tory party.' [1]

The events of the Cambridge election are worth remembering from the illustration which they afford of the distractions of the Ministry; the other incidents of the general election of 1826 were not remarkable. The Opposition gained no ground. Brougham failed in an attempt to carry his native county of Westmoreland; Cobbett was defeated at Preston; Hunt, much more signally, in Somersetshire; Lord John Russell was beaten in Huntingdonshire; and no impression was made on the Ministerial majority. The Ministry had nothing to fear from the votes of its opponents in the new Parliament, which assembled in the autumn. The Tories swarmed behind the Ministerial benches, 'bawling out the memory and praises of Pitt,' [2] and applauding every speech which came from the less Liberal section of the Cabinet. The short autumn session was, however, chiefly occupied by discussions on the foreign policy of the Government. The Ministry obtained an indemnity for admitting into the markets during the recess a greater quantity of foreign cereals than the Act of the previous Session had contemplated.[3] The great questions which had been raised at the general election were postponed till after the Christmas holidays; and the House adjourned on the 13th of December till the 8th of February.

The Ashantee War.

The year which was thus fast drawing to a close had been a very eventful one: it had, on the whole, been a disastrous one to the country. The nation no longer enjoyed the exceptional prosperity in which it had lately revelled, and dull trade and low wages were everywhere

[1] Lord Palmerston's own expression to his brother after the election. —Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 171.

[2] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 171.

[3] 7 & 8 Geo. IV. c. 3.

CHAP. VII. 1822.

provoking dissatisfaction and discontent. In the distant possessions of Britain, however, things were proceeding more prosperously. A war, which had arisen with the Burmese, which will be more properly described in a separate chapter devoted in another volume to Indian matters, was brought to a successful conclusion. A foul stain was immediately afterwards wiped off the British arms on the West Coast of Africa. For more than a century and a half the British had possessed a solitary fort on the coast of Guinea, known as Cape Coast Castle. The possession, situated only a short distance from the equator, was singularly unhealthy. It was surrounded by the Fantee tribes, and it was in the immediate neighbourhood of the Ashantees, a native tribe which had been gradually acquiring strength and importance. At the commencement of the nineteenth century the Ashantees had virtually subdued their weaker neighbours and had overrun the Fantee territory. The Fantees, defeated in repeated battles, retired under the walls of the British fort; and the Governor, with some imprudence, taking part in the fray, fired on the Ashantee warriors. The British were thus brought, for the first time, into collision with the powerful race which was virtually establishing its supremacy on the coast of Guinea. Neither side was, however, desirous of prosecuting the war. The British, on their part, had no resources on the spot to enable them to do so; the Ashantees shrank from a contest with the white man. They consented to receive a Consul at their capital, Coomassie; they arranged with him the terms of a treaty which was satisfactory to both parties, and they professed the utmost desire to establish peaceful relations with the British. Unfortunately, while the Consul, Dupuis, was arranging terms of accommodation with the Ashantees, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle (Smith) was negotiating a close alliance with the Fantees. Unfortunately, moreover, Sir Charles McCarthy, who in 1822

CHAP. VII. 1824.

was sent out as Governor of the Gold Coast, adopted the policy of his predecessor. McCarthy had the folly to defy the power of the Ashantees, and to encourage the Fantees to rise in revolt. The Ashantees, almost driven to war, seized a British sergeant, placed him in prison, and, after six weeks' confinement, beheaded him. But the Ashantees did more than put an inoffensive noncommissioned officer to death. They showed by their conduct that they fully realised the difficulties of the struggle in which they were about to engage, and that they were prepared to make the greatest exertions for the purpose. The King of Ashantee summoned all his vassals to his standard, propitiated the gods with human sacrifices, and boasted that McCarthy's skull should adorn his war-drum. Setting the huge force which he had collected in rapid motion, he marched upon Cape Coast Castle.

Sir C. McCarthy's defeat.

McCarthy had precipitated a war for which he was wholly unprepared. War, however, being inevitable, he endeavoured to secure the co-operation of any savage tribes who were ready to become his allies. With some difficulty he succeeded in collecting a 'very undisciplined rabble;' and, with this rabble and a few hundred regular troops, he took the field. The force which he had thus obtained was 'ill-equipped;' it had no means of transporting either ammunition or provisions; it probably would have been incapable of moving in any country; it was wholly unsuited for moving 'through the sloughs, the bush, and the rivers which intersected the country which was the scene' of the war. Yet McCarthy, with singular imprudence, plunged into the bush. The swamps were so bad that the men sank knee-deep into the mud at every step. The natives, who were employed to carry the ammunition and provisions, threw away their loads and deserted, or 'were incapacitated from following by famine and fatigue.' At last, after a toilsome march, McCarthy arrived on the banks of the Adoomansoo. On

CHAP. VII. 1824.

the afternoon of the 24th of January the Ashantees appeared on the opposite bank of the river. They made repeated attempts to cross the stream, but were always driven back with loss. After two hours' fighting the British troops required further supplies of ammunition. The storekeeper had only one small bag of ball and one small keg of powder on the field. The Ashantees, observing that the British fire slackened, made a second attempt to cross the river. At the same time, with more than the usual skill of savages, they made a flank movement to threaten McCarthy's retreat. The British force, irretrievably defeated, fell into confusion. McCarthy himself was wounded, and subsequently beheaded with the other officers who had carried him out of the action. The Ashantees remained the masters of the field. In the following summer they overran the whole Fantee territory, and encamped before Cape Coast Castle itself.

The British arms had suffered an annoying defeat from a savage opponent. Everyone endeavoured to lay the blame of the disaster on his neighbour. The troops declared with some reason that the reverse was due to the neglect of the storekeeper to provide them with ammunition. The storekeeper laid the blame on the Ordnance authorities at home. The first soldier of his age, the Duke of Wellington himself, did not escape from all censure. It was said that he had neglected to provide the Gold Coast with sufficient stores. He was overruled in his sensible protest that valuable ordnance and stores should not be sent without proper persons to take charge of them. His advice was disregarded; but his counsel was amply justified by the result. Fresh ordnance and stores were shipped for the Gold Coast, but no one knew how to land them on their arrival. A raft was constructed for the purpose, but was upset in the heavy breakers which perpetually beat upon the coast of Africa, and that part of the valuable stores which had

Improvident measures of the authorities at home.

been placed on it sank beneath the waves. The local authorities, discouraged by the loss, abstained from any further attempts at landing the stores. The transport which had been sent specially to the Gold Coast was allowed to sail away; and the stores which the Duke of Wellington had objected to sending to Africa were eventually landed in Barbadoes. The utter mismanagement, which was responsible both for the war itself and for McCarthy's defeat, was emphasized anew by the circumstance.[1]

The Ashantees defeated.

The peace of the Gold Coast was not disturbed during 1825; but the King of Ashantee, encouraged by the decisive success which the arms of his race had achieved, silently collected an army for the purpose of completing the conquests which he had already made. The native princes, alarmed at these preparations, applied to Colonel Purdon, the new Governor of the Gold Coast, for aid. Purdon, after making them promise that they would not run away, engaged to help them. The whole regular force at his disposal consisted of 80 men of the Royal African Corps; but he had also about 500 militia and 10,000 native allies. With this force Purdon took the field in July 1826. On the 7th of August he met the Ashantees on an extensive plain about twenty-four miles from Accra. The Ashantee army was 25,000 strong. The British force was immediately weakened by the desertion of its entire right wing. But the small body of regular troops and militia in the centre were not disheartened by the misconduct of their fainthearted auxiliaries. They opened, at once, a destructive fire of grape and canister on the Ashantees, who were dismayed at the effects of weapons with which they had formed no previous acquaintance. Seeing them waver, Purdon moved on them

[1] For these events see *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, pp. 223, 224; and the Duke of Wellington's excellent comments, in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 284, 304.

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before they had time to rally. A native tribe, obeying his orders with accuracy, fell on their left flank at the same moment. Attacked in front and flank, the Ashantees were decisively defeated. Some five thousand of them were killed and wounded, the whole of their camp equipage was taken, and McCarthy's skull was recovered by the victors. In a limited way Purdon's victory proved as decisive as Waterloo. Waterloo saved Great Britain for nearly forty years from a European war; Purdon gave his countrymen more than forty years of peace on the Coast of Guinea.

The little war which thus occurred did not attract much attention at the time. No notice was taken of it during the short autumnal session of 1826, and Parliament adjourned on the 13th of December without devoting half an hour of its time to the affairs of the Gold Coast. Before it was again assembled an event had occurred which was of more immediate interest than the affairs of Ashantee. The Duke of York died on the 5th of January, 1827; and the duke's death had an effect on the politics of his age which the death of even more prominent men would hardly have made. The duke was heir-presumptive to the throne. Though only a little younger than the king he never seems to have contemplated the possibility of his own decease before that of his elder brother; and the wretched health which George IV. endured afforded some ground for the duke's confidence. The possibility of his early accession to the throne gave the duke an especial influence in politics. He threw the whole of his influence into the cause of the extreme Tory section of the Cabinet. His death, therefore, was a fatal blow to the old-fashioned Tories of the school of Lord Eldon. It seemed, at the time, almost equally disastrous to the army. The duke had admittedly displayed considerable ability and tact as Commander-in-Chief. He had acquired the confidence of the troops, and

The death of the Duke of York.

he had raised the character of the force. The discreditable incidents in his career—his connection with Mrs. Clarke and his reckless extravagance—were forgotten, and his better qualities were alone remembered by the nation.

The command of the army.

The death of the Duke of York left the command of the army vacant; it made his brother, the Duke of Clarence, heir-presumptive to the throne. There was only one Englishman who was evidently competent to succeed to the duke's office. No one could pretend to compete for a military post with the Duke of Wellington. The chief command of the British army had, however, for many years been confided to a prince of the blood, and the royal family clung to a post to which they conceived that they had an almost hereditary claim. The king actually suggested that he should himself command his own army, and spoke to the officers about him on the subject. The 'preposterous' idea, as Lord Liverpool called it, was at once rejected by the Ministry, and the Duke of Wellington was formally appointed Commander-in-Chief.[1]

Increased allowance to the Duke of Clarence.

One of the questions raised by the Duke of York's decease was thus easily disposed of. The other occasioned much more dispute. The Duke of Clarence had become heir-presumptive to the throne, and desired, in consequence, to be placed in the position which the Duke of York had filled. The Duke and Duchess of York had received an income of 37,000*l.* a year. The Duke and Duchess of Clarence had an income of only 26,500*l.* The death of the Duke of York had, however, the effect of increasing the income of each of his younger brothers by 3,000*l.* a year, and had therefore raised the income of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence to 29,500*l.* The ministers proposed to grant the duke an additional 3,000*l.* and

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 531–537.

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the duchess an additional 6,000*l.* a year, thus raising their joint incomes to 38,500*l.* The proposal excited strong opposition both in the House and in the country. It was argued that an income of 30,000*l.* a year was amply adequate to enable the duke to support his position; it was urged that his elder brother's death did not necessitate any alteration in his establishment; and that the condition of the country made it especially undesirable to increase the allowances of the royal family. These arguments were urged in various debates, and enforced by repeated divisions. The minority, however, which resisted the proposal gradually dwindled. The original resolution was carried by 167 votes to 65; the report was agreed to by 173 votes to 57. The second reading of the bill was passed by 128 votes to 39; the House decided to go into committee by 99 votes to 15; and the Opposition did not venture on a division on the third reading. The heir-presumptive, therefore, obtained his additional income; but people thought that it was dearly purchased by the unpopularity which it brought and the publicity of the discussions which it provoked. The royal family could hardly afford to be perpetually applying to Parliament for increased allowances. It was unfortunate for them that their applications were usually made in years of distress.[1]

[1] The six younger sons of George III. had originally 60,000*l.* settled on them, with benefit of survivorship. The five survivors, therefore, received an additional 2,000*l.* each on the death of the Duke of Kent. The four survivors became entitled to an additional 3,000*l.* each on the death of the Duke of York. An additional 6,000*l.* was granted to each prince in 1806, and an additional 6,000*l.* to the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Kent on their marriage. The Duke of Clarence, it will be recollected, refused his 6,000*l.* on that occasion. But he took it three years afterwards, *with its arrears.* (*Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. p. 1125.) He had also an extra 2,500*l.* a year granted to him on the ground that his profession, the navy, brought him smaller remuneration than his brother's profession, the army.—See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. pp. 540, 565, 820, 1247, 1342, for the debates. The minority against the proposal was by no means composed of Radicals. Lord Althorp, Lord Howick, Lord Morpeth, and Lord Tavistock all voted against it.

Long before the grant to the Duke of Clarence was agreed to the Duke of York had been buried at Windsor. The funeral was not a military one; it was, in fact, impossible to have a military funeral, as there were not troops enough in England to bury a field-marshal.[1] But it was largely attended. Lord Liverpool was, indeed, fortunately for himself, absent at Bath. But the Ministry was otherwise well represented. The Duke of Wellington was one of the pall-bearers; Lord Melville, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was one of the eight peers who assisted the chief mourner; and Huskisson, Wynn, Canning, Peel, Lord Westmoreland, and Lord Eldon represented the Cabinet. The morning was bitterly cold; St. George's Chapel intensely damp; and many of those who attended the ceremony had cause for recollecting it. Pelham, Bishop of Lincoln, caught so bad a cold that he was dead in three weeks; the Duke of Wellington, who was in delicate health, was made seriously unwell; and Canning, whose constitution had been shattered by repeated attacks of gout, was seized with a dangerous illness.[2] When Parliament met, on the 8th of February, he was at Brighton, too unwell either to write or to read his own letters, or to hold any long conversation on public business.[3] The health of the Prime Minister was not more satisfactory than that of the Foreign Secretary. Lord Liverpool, at the commencement of 1827, had been for twenty years continuously in office. Worn by incessant labour, his health during the last two years had been visibly giving way. He was so broken after the session of 1824 that political gossips confidently anticipated his retirement; he was so much annoyed at the course of events in 1825 that he contem-

The Duke of York's funeral.

Illness of Lord Liverpool.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 537.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Chron., p. 228; Greville, vol. i. p. 89. See, for allusions to the previous health of Canning, Buckingham's *George IV.*, pp. 218, 243.

[3] See Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 583, 587.

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plated resigning. He staked his existence as a minister in 1826 on a minute point of policy to which his whole party objected.[1] The differences in the Cabinet in the autumn of that year increased his anxiety. Half of his colleagues objected to Huskisson's policy on the Corn Law question; and the difference was so marked and so serious that Lord Liverpool actually doubted in December whether the Ministry would be able to meet Parliament in the following February.[2] Oppressed by these anxieties, Lord Liverpool went down to Bath to recruit his failing health. He recovered sufficiently to be able to return to town in February: he was in his place in the House of Lords when Parliament met. He spoke, nine days afterwards (on the 17th of February), on the Duke of Clarence's grant. 'His friends remarked upon the unusual inefficiency in his manner in opening this proposition.'[3] Yet they none of them seem to have anticipated the coming catastrophe. The morning afterwards Lord Liverpool retired as usual, after breakfast, to his library. His servant, going into the room soon afterwards, found him lying insensible on the floor. He had been seized with a mixed fit of apoplexy and paralysis; and he never recovered sufficient consciousness to enable him to resign his office. In this miserable condition he lingered on for two years, when death relieved him from further suffering.

Lord Liverpool's seizure marks an important epoch in the history of the present century. Lord Liverpool himself filled an important position in the councils of his sovereign. Perhaps no Englishman ever held more influential offices, or occupied them during a more critical period or for a longer time. Foreign Minister; Home Secretary; Colonial Minister, charged with the conduct of

[1] Duke of Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 85, 98, 103. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 435.

[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 441.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 463.

the war; Prime Minister in turn, Lord Liverpool had the opportunity of making a great impression on the policy of his age. During his tenure of the Foreign Office the Peace of Amiens was signed; during his tenure of the Colonial Office marked success first smiled on the British arms in the Peninsula. During his Premiership the battle of Waterloo was fought; a durable peace was concluded; and the country at home passed through alternate phases of adversity and prosperity. The earlier years of his Administration were memorable for the severe policy which culminated in the Six Acts; the later years of his Administration were remarkable for the liberal measures which have been recorded in this chapter. But Lord Liverpool was not the originator of either policy. During the first ten years of his Ministry, Castlereagh was the guiding spirit who inspired its measures. During the last four years of his Ministry, Canning was, to all intents and purposes, Prime Minister. During the whole period Lord Liverpool kept order among his colleagues, composed their quarrels, and oiled the wheels to make it possible for the machinery of Government to work. With great knowledge of finance, he never attempted to guide the financial policy of his Government. He probably despised Vansittart's measures, but he supported them. He certainly approved Robinson's proceedings, and he supported them. He supported Sidmouth in his defence of the Criminal Code; he supported Peel in his reform of it. He supported Castlereagh in maintaining the Holy Alliance; he supported Canning in resisting it. With great tact, with considerable judgment, with much ability, he had not the power of impressing a personal character on his Ministry. In one sense he had his reward: he was enabled to remain in office for an unprecedented period, and to combine the most unpromising materials in an ostensible union. Men consented to work under him who would have positively refused to work under

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anyone else. But the discordant elements of his Ministry were scattered when he was struck down; and men recollected that, with all his tact and all his conciliatory manners, the Prime Minister had lived and died without a policy.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the unhappy period of his residence in India Mackintosh was in the habit of occasionally visiting places beyond the boundaries of his own jurisdiction. On one of these excursions he went to the Portuguese settlement of Goa, and he recorded, in a remarkable sentence in his diary, the impression which the visit made upon him. 'No mosque, pagoda, or public rite of the native religions,' he wrote, 'was, or is, allowed at Goa. No native of the least rank or character could live here. Even the engineers are forbidden to employ any but Christian labourers, as the King of Great Britain would have been forbidden to have employed Nelson if he had been a Catholic. The effect of this wise system is visible. In Goa are neither merchants, nor bankers, nor commercial correspondence with the rest of India. No bill can here be cashed.' 'Among the concessions made to religious liberty in England during the reign of William and Mary,' wrote another profound statesman, 'there were none in favour of the Roman Catholics. On the contrary, new laws were passed, of excessive severity, tending to render the Roman Catholics poor and ignorant, heaping penalty upon penalty, and making them, as it were, slaves among a nation of freemen. The reigns of Elizabeth, of James I., of Charles I., of Charles II., and of James II. had been disturbed by Roman Catholic plots, more or less sanguinary, some using as their means the assassination of the sovereign, others the introduction of a foreign army, but all tending to extinguish the liberties and destroy the independence of England.

Religious intolerance.

CHAP. VIII.

1816.

Whether the precautions adopted by the English Parliament were wise I will not decide; but I am clearly of opinion they were just.'[1]

The opinion which has been quoted of one of the greatest constitutional statesmen modifies the inference which might otherwise be unjustly drawn from Mackintosh's withering sarcasm. A system which Lord Russell, in the earlier years of his memorable career, deliberately declared to have been just deserves, at any rate, careful study from anyone who ventures to impugn its injustice.

Circumstances under which the penal laws were passed.

The penal laws, whose severity Lord Russell admits to have been excessive, were perhaps the natural consequence of the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century. The nation had previously almost universally professed the faith of the Church of Rome. The Pope, indeed, had never possessed in this country the authority and power which he claimed to exercise in other lands. But every Englishman was necessarily a Roman Catholic, because Roman Catholicism was practically the only Christian religion known in England. The Reformation, in the eyes of its promoters, did not alter this condition. It was the object of the first Reformers to remove the abuses which had crept into the Church: they had originally no intention of breaking up Christianity into hostile sections. Great changes, however, either in religion or politics, are not likely to produce unanimity of opinion. When the old landmarks are broken down some persons will venture further than others into the unknown region beyond. When the authority of Rome was once disowned a variety of opinions were certain to arise on the nature of the religion which was to be substituted for the old faith. A few persons, clinging to the church in which they had been born, preferred to adhere to the forms to which they had been accustomed. The mass of the nation, with Henry at their head, desired to

[1] Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 148. Russell on English Government, p. 144.

free themselves from the interference of the Pope, but to preserve the ritual of the Romish Church; while more advanced thinkers thought, if the breach were to be made at all, that the ancient ritual should be swept away, and that all the forms of Popery should be banished from the country.

The compromise of the Reformation.

These various opinions, warmly advocated by influential persons, resulted in a compromise. An endeavour was made to concede something to all parties. The nature of these concessions has been admirably told by the greatest of recent historians, Macaulay. The organisation of the Romish Church was preserved: its liturgy was retained, but it was translated into English; the rich vestments in which the priests of Rome had officiated were discarded, but the clergy were allowed a white surplice. Ordination and confirmation were enjoined, but they were no longer regarded as sacraments. The symbols of superstition were abolished from the churches, but the sign of the Cross was retained in baptism. The doctrine of transubstantiation was rejected, but the people were ordered to receive the sacrament on their knees. These arrangements formed a compromise. The compromise was intended to unite the whole nation in one Church. Uniformity in religion was regarded as indispensable. The faith of Cranmer was very different from that of Elizabeth; the religion of Elizabeth differed widely from that of Charles II. But Cranmer, Elizabeth, and Charles II. were all agreed in enforcing uniformity by the most crucial measures. Cranmer was prepared to put down resistance at all hazards. Elizabeth insisted on punishing 'recusancy' with fines. Charles II. directed that the Prayer-book and the Prayer-book alone should be used in public worship.

The desire for uniformity.

The attempt to establish uniformity by Act of Parliament ended, of course, in a miserable failure. 'Religion,' said one of the most learned men of the day, 'is

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like the fashion. One man wears his doublet slashed, another laced, another plain; but every man has a doublet. So every man has his religion. We differ about trimming. Men say they are of the same religion for quietness' sake; but if the matter were examined you would scarce find three anywhere of the same religion in all points.'[1] Selden's quaint language exactly expressed the religious views of his age. The people were agreed in professing Christianity, but they differed about the trimmings. The Roman Catholics naturally thought that the Reformation had gone too far. The extreme Protestants were angry because it had not gone far enough. One party was shocked at the suppression of the mass, the other party was horrified at being told to kneel at the sacrament. The Roman Catholics refused to abandon their own opinions at the dictation of the State, and were cut down for 'recusancy.' The extreme Protestants declined to read a Liturgy which they considered superstitious, and were fined for nonconformity. Persecution naturally led to plot and counterplot. A Papist regarded as a rebel was almost forced to rebel against the Government. A Nonconformist, who was fined if he did not receive the sacrament, was compelled to choose between obedience and resistance. The passion for uniformity converted the extreme men on both sides into open enemies of the Government, and the Government had no choice but to alter its policy or to treat all nonconformity as criminal.

which led to persecution and resistance,

During the last years of the sixteenth and the earlier years of the seventeenth century the Nonconformists, or the Puritans, as they began to be called, were assenting parties to this policy. Much as they disliked the Liturgy of the Church of England, the tenets of the Church of Rome were still more obnoxious to them; and it so happened that Roman Catholicism was the great danger with

with the assent, in the first instance, of the Nonconformists,

[1] Selden's *Table Talk*, 'Religion.'

which England was threatened. Spain was the mightiest power of the world. The monarch of Spain was a merciless bigot, whose sole aim and object was to extend his own influence and the authority of the Pope. Every Englishman had heard of the horrible treatment to which Philip II. was exposing the Netherlands. The mighty Armada, which was being collected in the ports of Spain, was threatening the shores of England with similar desolation. The cause of the Church of Rome appeared the cause of the enemies of England; and every law intended to reduce the authority of Rome was assumed to be patriotic and wise. The end at which the nation was aiming was apparently accomplished with the defeat of the Armada. The cause of the Reformation seemed at last safe. But the cause of the Reformation was threatened with a new danger at the very moment of its seeming victory. Elizabeth was a warm opponent of the designs of Rome, but she had no particular affection for the principles which three-fourths of her subjects were professing. Her successor based his policy on the divine right of kings and the divine right of bishops. Elizabeth's dislike for the coldness of Puritanical worship induced her to establish the Ecclesiastical Commission. James roundly told the Puritans that he would make them conform or harry them out of the land. The pretensions which James raised and the policy which he pursued were renewed by his weak but well-meaning successor. The Puritans, in consequence, were forced into violent opposition to the Court, and, when civil war broke out, became its most formidable adversaries. In England both Houses of Parliament swore to defend the Protestant religion. In Scotland 'a covenant with God to continue in the profession of the Reformed religion' was signed with rapture. The whole strength of the Reformers was thus ranged against the Crown; and the Crown was compelled to rely for its support on the

who, ultimately, range themselves against the throne.

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Roman Catholics, the High Churchmen, and the Churchmen who preferred their interests to their conscience.

If Charles I. had succeeded in his memorable struggle, the Star Chamber would have been in all probability restored, religious liberty ruthlessly suppressed, and England would possibly have been neither Protestant nor free. He failed, and the victory of the Puritanical party restored the cause of the Reformation. But the Puritans were no more tolerant than the Catholics or the Churchmen. They made use of their victory to propagate their own tenets. Conforming clergymen were turned out of their cures; Episcopacy was suppressed; and Nonconformists appointed to every benefice that became vacant. Nor were the Puritans satisfied with depriving their opponents of office; they desired to engraft their own views and their own asceticism on the nation. Merry England was to be merry England no longer; the sports in which successive generations had indulged were condemned as unlawful; and Churchmen were enjoined to turn Christmas, the happiest season of the year, into a period of penance and fasting. For a few years the Puritans succeeded in stamping their own character on the nation; but their success was achieved at a cost which their descendants are even now experiencing. The Restoration came; and, with the return of the Stuarts, the nation threw off the bondage which religious asceticism had imposed on it. The enforced propriety which all classes had been compelled to observe was succeeded by an unrestricted license. The Puritans had closed the playhouses at a time when Shakespeare was popular; the Restoration reopened them to laugh at the coarse dramas of Wycherley. The Puritans had turned Christmas into a fast; the wits of the Restoration scoffed at fast and festival. The alteration in the tone of society was naturally reflected in the composition of the House of Commons. Under the Commonwealth the Puritans had enjoyed an

The victory of the Puritans,

and its consequences.

The reaction.

indisputable authority in the Senate; under the Restoration they found themselves in a hopeless minority. The extremity to which the Puritans had pushed their views had intensified the reaction against them.

The measures of the Restoration.

The Puritans had no right to expect much mercy from the Parliament of Charles II. They had themselves set the example of persecution, and they could hardly complain at the adoption by their opponents of a precedent of their own making. Episcopacy was restored. An Act of Uniformity was passed, and rigorously enforced. Hundreds, even thousands, of clergymen were turned out of their livings for nonconformity. Parliament, however, did not stop at this point. The strength of the Puritan party was supposed to lie in the towns. The House of Commons decided on regulating the corporations. Every member of a corporation was required to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the English Church, and to sign a declaration renouncing the principles on which the Nonconformists had steadily acted. Charles endeavoured to mitigate the intolerance of his Parliament. He had little affection for the Nonconformists, but he had great sympathy with the Roman Catholics, and he saw that the provisions of the Corporation Act would apply to Rome as well as to Dissent. But Charles was powerless to restrain the violence of his Parliament. The Corporation Act became law; and the intolerance of the majority did not cease with this success. In 1664 a trumpery rising in the North of England was made the excuse for fresh measures of repression. A law was passed, known in history as the Conventicle Act, by which all private meetings for religious exercises including more than five persons besides the members of the family were made illegal. It was found that some of the ejected clergy still continued to reside in the neighbourhood of their former ministrations. In 1665 the Five Mile Act made it illegal for any nonconforming minister to come

The corporations.

The Conventicle Act and Five Mile Act.

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within five miles of any city, corporate town, or Parliamentary borough where he had been in the habit of ministering.[1]

These rigorous laws, passed in the first five years after the Restoration, were mainly directed against the Nonconformists. Their originators undoubtedly expected that they would make nonconformity impossible. Their ultimate effect was very different. Dissent might possibly have died out from the universal unpopularity which the Puritans had incurred. It struck a new and deeper root under the persecution with which they were assailed. Before a dozen years were over Parliament found itself face to face with a greater danger than nonconformity. Charles had never liked the intolerant legislation which had found favour with his Parliament. He was sincerely anxious to relieve the Roman Catholics from the operation of the Act of Uniformity, and he could not do so without concurrently removing the disabilities of the Dissenters. The Crown claimed, or, which was the same thing, Charles claimed, what was usually known as the dispensing power, or the right of suspending the penal laws in force. In 1672 Charles had the audacity to exercise this power. The moment which the king chose for the purpose was an unlucky one. A few days afterwards war broke out with Holland; the Exchequer became bankrupt; and Charles was compelled to meet his Parliament for the purpose of asking for a supply. He obtained the money which he wanted, but he gave the House of Commons an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion on the arbitrary nature of the prerogative which he claimed. The House of Commons objected to the use of the dispensing power; they objected to it still more because they fancied that it had been exercised in the interest of the Roman Catholics. They replied to Charles's claim by

The dispensing power.

[1] The Five Mile Act and the Conventicle Act were both repealed in 1812.—*Ann. Reg.* 1812, Hist., p. 121.

passing the Test Act. All persons holding either civil or military offices were obliged to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, to receive the Sacrament, and to renounce the doctrine of transubstantiation. The famous Act was passed without any opposition worthy of the name. The Nonconformists themselves, alarmed at the bearing of the Court towards Rome, sacrificed their own immediate interests and joined the Churchmen in supporting it.

The Test Act.

The Corporation Act had been mainly directed against nonconformity; the Test Act was chiefly aimed at the Roman Catholics; but, just as the Roman Catholics had been affected by the Corporation Act, so the Dissenters were affected by the Test Act. For fifteen years they suffered from the disabilities which were thus imposed on them. But, with the Revolution of 1688, a new era of legislation commenced. A Popish king had been driven out of the kingdom; a Protestant king had been happily established on the throne. Every Protestant was necessarily in favour of William; but no Roman Catholic could be enthusiastic for a revolution which permanently excluded princes of his own faith from the succession. The Dissenters were rewarded for their support by the promise of toleration; and one of the first Acts of the Convention Parliament gave them the religious relief which they desired. A Toleration Act was passed, which Macaulay has mentioned as a remarkable instance of the manner in which legislation is framed in this country. The laws of which the Dissenters complained were not repealed; they were not even repealed so far as Nonconformists were concerned. But everyone who took a new oath of fidelity to the crown, who abjured the damnable doctrine that princes excommunicated by the Pope might be murdered by their subjects, and who signed a declaration of faith in the Holy Trinity and in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, was relieved from the

The Toleration Act.

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operation of statutes which disabled him from worshipping God according to his own conscience. The Quaker, who conscientiously objected to take an oath, was permitted to make a declaration to the same effect. The Act practically relieved the Nonconformists from those disabilities which the Restoration had imposed upon them which interfered with the exercise of their religion. The law, indeed, still remained; but the law, so far as they were concerned, was made inoperative.

Such were the concessions which were 'made to religious liberty,' but no concessions were made to the Roman Catholics. An Act of Charles II. had already made it impossible for a Papist to sit in Parliament. An Act of William III. deprived the Papists of the elective franchise. Still more rigorous legislation was, however, in store for them. An Act, designed to prevent the further growth of Popery, inflicted the punishment of imprisonment for life on any Popish priest who had the temerity to perform the services of his church; it disabled the Papist from purchasing real property and from inheriting real estate.[1] It seemed hardly possible for the ingenuity of man to devise a harsher method for suppressing an objectionable religion; yet the laws which applied to the Roman Catholics in Great Britain were mild in comparison with the penal code enforced against them in Ireland. The Irish Roman Catholics would have willingly exchanged places with their co-religionists in Great Britain.

[1] The history of the legislation which has thus been summarised will be found in the Statute Book. The Corporation Act is the 13th Charles II., c. 1. The Uniformity Act, 14th Charles II., c. 4. The Conventicle Act, 16th Charles II., c. 4. The Five Mile Act, 17th Charles II., c. 21. The Test Act, 25th Charles II., c. 2. The Act which prevented Papists sitting in Parliament was the 30th Charles II., st. 2. The Act which deprived them of the franchise was the 7th and 8th William III., c. 27. The Act which imposed on them civil disabilities was the 11th and 12th William III., c. 4. Macaulay has described the great religious struggle of the seventeenth century so admirably that I almost hesitated to set down the few preceding observations; without which, however, the history of 1828-29 would be unintelligible.—See also Green's *Short History of the English People*, and Lord John Russell's speech in 1828, in moving the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

The treatment which was applied to Ireland for centuries is the subject of the darkest chapter in the history of England. It accounts for, if it does not justify, the hatred with which the Saxon in that country is still regarded by the Celt, and explains the long series of obscure rebellions in Ireland against the English Government. The treatment of the Rayahs by the Turks, of the Poles by the Russians, of the Dutch by the Spaniards has been constantly reprobated by successive generations of Englishmen; yet Ireland has experienced from her English rulers some of the evils which were inflicted on the Netherlands, on Poland, and on Greece. The sufferings of the Irish people partly arose from the very imperfect hold which the kings of England possessed over the country. Nominally lords of Ireland, receiving the occasional submission of the chieftains of the wild Irish septs, who maintained themselves in barbarous independence in the north and west of the island, the kings of England had really no authority beyond the few counties which were included in the Pale. From the days of Henry II. to the days of the Tudors this state of things continued. A small portion of Leinster and Munster, included within the Pale, was governed by English laws and English customs; while the Irish beyond the Pale acknowledged no authority except the Brehon or Irish Law. Sir Edward Poynings, indeed, by a famous statute, which still bears his name, extended all the laws of England to the whole of Ireland. But Poynings' laws were, in Sir John Davies' quaint language, 'like good lessons set for a lute that is broken and out of tune.' 'The king's laws were not obeyed twenty miles in compass. Whereupon grew that byeword used by the Irish, "that they dwelt by west the law, which dwelt beyond the river of the Barrow," which is within thirty miles of Dublin.'[1] This state of things naturally

The penal laws in Ireland.

The condition of Ireland before the sixteenth century.

[1] Sir John Davies' *Historical Tracts*, London, 1787, pp. 176, 177. Sir John Davies' *Discovery of the True Causes why Ireland was never*

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led to constant trouble. There was continual border warfare between the English and the Irish. The Irish treasury was usually empty,[1] and to support the war the English captains were obliged to levy 'coin livery and pay' upon the English settlers. The English settlers naturally gave up their freeholds when they found that they were not only exposed to the attacks of the Irish, but that they were also liable to be pillaged by their own governors. Some of them returned to England; others of them, becoming lawless from long residence in a lawless country, changed their very names and habits, and placed themselves under the Brehon Law, becoming more Irish than the Irish themselves.

The colonisation of Ulster.

Ireland remained in this miserable condition from the days of the Plantagenets to the time of the Tudors. The great rebellion of Tyrone, in the reign of Elizabeth, led to the introduction of a new system. The rebellion had broken out in Ulster, which was at that time the most rude and uncivilized part of Ireland; and the Government, after its suppression, decided on making its recurrence impracticable. Many years before, the country of the O'Connors, bordering on the Pale, had been divided into shires, which had been called King's County and Queen's County, and colonised by English settlers. The same policy was pursued, to a much greater extent, in Ulster. Two-thirds of the North of Ireland were declared to have been forfeited by the rebellion; and much of this vast territory was allotted to settlers from England and Scotland. The material results which followed this act of robbery have helped to conceal its true nature. It seems ungenerous to abuse a policy which turned a wilderness into a garden, and which created new industries in places where industry had never been known. But

brought under Obedience of the Crown of England, from which the quotation in the text is made, is an excellent short history of the English in Ireland antecedent to the period dealt with by Mr. Froude.

[1] 'In thesauro nihil.'—Ibid., p. 20.

the good result cannot justify the evil act; and the good result was, in itself, attended with many drawbacks. For thirty years the Irish sullenly acquiesced in a fate which they had no power to resist; but during the whole of this period they awaited their opportunity for revenge. The opportunity arrived. The differences between Charles I. and his Parliament weakened the reins of administration. The Irish rose against the English settlers. Their long-nurtured discontent broke out with pitiless violence. Scotch and English, men and women, old and young, were cut down in one cruel massacre; and all England shuddered at a story which had had no parallel in its history.[1]

The mas sacre of 1641.

The colonisation of Ulster had been effected in 1609; the massacre of the English occurred in 1641; the revenge was postponed for another eight years. During the interval the English had other work to do than to avenge the massacre of their unhappy kinsfolk. But the work which was done in England had provided them with a more effective army than any which the Irish had hitherto encountered. Cromwell and Ireton were men whose words were few, whose swords were sharp, and who had no pity for Irish Catholics. The pacification of Ireland by Cromwell was effected by an indiscriminate slaughter of the Irish. 'The work of conquest' was continued by Ireton and Ludlow with the same fierce perseverance with which it had been commenced by Cromwell. Every Irishman found in arms was either slain or driven out of the country; and Irishmen were compelled to choose between forced labour in the West Indies and voluntary service in foreign armies. Cromwell's settlement of Ireland did not, however, stop at this point. His army was paid by debentures secured on the land of Ireland. The conclusion of the struggle involved their redemption;

Cromwell's Irish policy.

[1] Mr. Lecky has thrown some doubt on the incidents of this massacre. *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. pp. 128–138.

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their redemption necessitated the forfeiture of the estate of every Irish landlord. The old proprietors were driven beyond the Shannon, and their property was parcelled out among Cromwell's soldiers. The colonisation of Ulster had undoubtedly created new industries in the North of Ireland. Cromwell's stout-hearted settlers improved the condition of Leinster and Munster. A strong government insured peace and quiet; and peace and quiet had the effect of promoting trade and agriculture.

His policy is modified after the Restoration.

If succeeding governments had persevered in Cromwell's system, the Irish question might have worn a very different shape from that which it ultimately assumed. The restoration of the Stuarts, however, made Cromwell's system impracticable. Charles could hardly have consented to the permanent exclusion of thousands of Irish proprietors from their estates, whose chief fault was the support which they had given to his father and himself. After every debenture issued to Cromwell's troops had been redeemed by a grant of land, large tracts of country remained unsettled. The residue was restored, under the new government, to the old proprietors, and the hardship of their fate was by this means to some extent alleviated. But Cromwell's settlement had left its mark on the ill-fated country. Before it the Irish had possessed two acres out of every three of cultivated land in Ireland. After the arrangements concluded under Charles II. their holding was reduced to one-third[1] of the soil which was worth holding. The 'curse of Cromwell' had increased the bitterness of Celt against Saxon, of Catholic against Protestant. The policy of Charles II. had not obliterated the recollection of the wrong which the Irish had suffered; but it had restored to them the power of revenge of which Cromwell had deprived them.

[1] Froude (*English in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 153); but cf. Green's *Short History*, p. 620, and Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 181.

Rebellion might possibly have been crushed out by Cromwell's drastic measures. Peace became impossible when Cromwell's purge was supplemented by Charles II.'s sedative.

The Revolution.

The first period in the history of the English in Ireland embraces the long centuries of imperfect conquest and border warfare which commenced with the first of the Plantagenets and terminated with the last of the Tudors. The second period in the history of the English in Ireland commences with the reign of Elizabeth and terminates with the Stuart dynasty. The colonisation of Ulster and the settlement by Cromwell are its two leading incidents: they were principally responsible for the bitter hatred with which the Irish regarded and still regard the English. A third period in the history of Ireland commenced with the Revolution. James II. had pusillanimously deserted the throne which he had disgraced, and had not had the spirit to strike in England a single blow for himself or for his family. But he had reason to expect that the circumstances which made him unpopular in England would commend him to his Irish subjects. The Irish had always supported the cause of his dynasty; they professed the same religion as himself; they were too glad of a pretext for striking one more blow to deliver themselves from their conquerors. James landed in Ireland, and the Irish rose to welcome him. The ranks of his army were speedily filled; the Protestant supporters of William were unable to keep the field against the Irish; Derry was besieged, and reduced to extremities; Schomberg saw his soldiers dying by hundreds inside their trenches at Dundalk; and James was apparently secure of an easy victory. His own cowardice and misconduct, the courage and sagacity of his great adversary, averted a catastrophe which might have changed the fate not only of Ireland but the world. The passage of the Boyne was effected; James, in panic, fled from the country; and Dutch Ginkel, who had suc-

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ceeded Dutch Schomberg, won the battle of Aghrim and commenced the siege of Limerick. The history of the penal laws which crushed the Irish Catholics for more than a century commenced with this memorable siege.

The siege of Limerick.

The city of Limerick was probably capable of making a stout resistance. A stout resistance would have entailed considerable inconvenience on the besiegers, but it would hardly have averted the ultimate fate of the city. It was, therefore, the interest of both parties to attempt to make terms with each other. The Irish might fairly hope for consideration if they saved the English the expense and anxiety of a long siege; the English might honourably concede the most advantageous terms to a garrison which had enabled them to complete their conquest. These considerations properly influenced the commanders of both armies. The Irish offered to surrender if certain terms were secured to them. Ginkel offered alternative conditions, which were afterwards embodied in the famous Articles of Limerick. By the first of these articles it was agreed that 'the Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of Charles II.; and their Majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security in the exercise of their religion as may preserve them from the disturbance of the said religion.' By the second article 'all the inhabitants or residents of Limerick or any other garrison, all officers and soldiers now in arms, under any commission of King James, in the several counties of Limerick, Clare, Cork, and Mayo, *and all such as are under their protection in the said counties*, shall hold possession of and enjoy all their estates of freehold and inheritance; and all the rights, titles, and interest which they or any of them held, enjoyed, or were rightfully entitled to in the reign

The Articles of Limerick.

of Charles II.; and all and every of the said persons, of what profession, trade, or calling soever they be, shall and may use, exercise, and practise their several respective professions, trades, and callings as freely as they did use, exercise, and enjoy the same in the reign of King Charles II.'

Such was the substance of the two first articles of the Treaty of Limerick. In the draft which was subsequently submitted for the ratification of the Crown the important words which are italicised in the foregoing paragraph were accidentally omitted. The omission was discovered and rectified by letters patent. The letters patent rectifying the omission stated that the words 'had been casually omitted by the writer;' that 'the omission was not discovered till after the articles had been signed,' but 'was taken notice of before the town was surrendered;' that the Lords Justices promised that the omission should 'be made good; and that the Crown had therefore ordered the restoration of the omitted words' to the article.[1]

[1] Mr. Green, in his excellent *Short History of the English People*, writes: 'Both sides were, of course, well aware that such a treaty was merely waste paper, for Ginckle had no power to conclude it, nor had the Irish Lords Justices. The latter, indeed, only promised to do all they could to bring about its ratification by Parliament, and this ratification was never granted.' This is not quite an accurate statement of the case. The Lords Justices and Ginkel undertook that 'their Majesties will ratify these articles within the space of eight months or sooner, and use their utmost endeavours that the same shall be ratified and confirmed by Parliament.' It is clear from this language that Ginkel and the Lords Justices had full power from the Crown to treat. It must be also equally clear that the ratification by Parliament was only necessary for those portions of the articles which pointed to a modification in the law. The ratification by the Crown made this plain. The Crown ratified and confirmed the same, and every clause, matter, and thing therein contained. '*And as to such parts thereof*, for which an Act of Parliament shall be found to be necessary, we shall recommend the same to be made good by Parliament.' From the very moment at which the Treaty of Limerick was signed the Crown was pledged to secure to the Roman Catholics all the rights which they had enjoyed in the reign of Charles II. Mr. Froude, in his *English in Ireland*, has given an accurate account of this famous treaty; but he implies throughout that Parliament was justified in re-omitting the words, which the letters patent had restored, to the second article. Mr. Froude overlooks the facts (1) that Parliament omitted, not only these words, for the omission of which it had a shadow of justification, but the whole of the first article, for

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Disabilities of Irish Roman Catholics in the reign of Charles II.

The Treaty of Limerick had confirmed the Irish Catholics in the privileges which they had enjoyed in the time of Charles II. It had held out to them a hope that further concessions would be granted to them. But the disabilities under which the Irish Roman Catholics had lain in the time of Charles II. were not serious. They were as follows:—(1) Every person entering orders, or graduating at the University, was to take the oath of supremacy; (2) every ecclesiastic and every person accepting office was to take the oath of supremacy; (3) every person admitted into a corporation was to take the oath of supremacy; (4) every person, without lawful excuse for absence, was to attend some place of worship of the Established Church, or to forfeit twelve pence; (5) the Chancellor was at liberty to appoint a guardian to the child of a Roman Catholic; (6) a Roman Catholic schoolmaster was prohibited from teaching without a license from the ordinary and without taking the oath of supremacy.[1] It was not very easy to justify these laws; but their continuance did not constitute any very serious grievance. The Treaty of Limerick, however, had apparently foreshadowed their modification; and the Irish Roman Catholics awaited, therefore, with anxiety the meeting of an Irish Parliament. The Irish Parliament met in the autumn of 1692; it was dissolved in the autumn of 1693; but no proposal was made to it for the modification of the penal laws. The Parliament of Ire-

the omission of which it had no justification whatever; (2) that Parliament ought never to have had the opportunity of formally confirming the article, as the treaty was good without its confirmation. All that Parliament ought to have been invited to do was to give the Roman Catholics 'such *further* security in the exercise of their religion' as the Crown had promised to use its utmost endeavours to obtain for them. See Green's *Short History*, p. 678; Froude's *English in Ireland*, vol. i. pp. 203–208; and cf. Parnell's *History of the Penal Laws in Ireland*, pp. 5–12. Mr. Lecky in his *History of the Eighteenth Century* also weakens his argument by assuming that the ratification by Parliament was required for the validity of the treaty. (See vol. i. p. 279; cf. Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 464.)

[1] Baldwin's *History of the Laws against Catholics*, p. 221.

land was not again convened till the spring of 1695; and the king then, forgetting the Treaty of Limerick, told the members that 'he was intent upon the great work of a firm settlement of Ireland upon the Protestant interest.' The Parliament readily adopted the advice which the king offered to them. An Act of 1695 'deprived the Roman Catholics of the means of educating their children, either at home or abroad, and of the privilege of being guardians either of their own or of any other person's children.' Another Act of the same year deprived the Roman Catholics of the right of bearing arms or of keeping any horse which was worth more than 5*l*. An Act of 1697 ordered the expulsion of every Roman Catholic priest from Ireland. The Parliament, which had imposed these disabilities on Irish Roman Catholics, proceeded to confirm the Articles of Limerick, or 'so much of them as may consist with the safety and welfare of your Majesty's subjects of this kingdom,' and by a gross act of injustice omitted the whole of the first of these articles,[1] and the important paragraph in the second article which had been accidentally omitted from the original copy of the Treaty, and subsequently restored to it by letters patent under the Great Seal. Reasonable men may differ on the propriety or impropriety of the conditions on which the surrender of Limerick was secured; but it is difficult to read the story of their repudiation without a deep sense of shame.

The penal laws of William III.

Three other Acts relating to the Roman Catholics were passed during the reign of William. An Act of 1697 forbade the intermarriage of Protestants and Papists. An Act of 1698 prevented Papists from being solicitors. Another Act of the same year stopped their employment

[1] See Sir H. Parnell's *History of the Penal Laws*, pp. 13–16. The Acts referred to in the text were the 7th William III., c. 4; the 7th William III., c. 5; the 9th William III., c. 7; and the 9th William III., c. 2.

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as gamekeepers.[1] William died; and the breach of faith, which he had countenanced, was forgotten amidst the pressure of the legislation which disgraced the reign of his successor. Two Acts passed in this reign, for preventing the further growth of Popery, were styled by Burke the 'ferocious Acts of Anne.' By the first of these Acts a Papist, having a Protestant son, was debarred from selling, mortgaging, or devising any portion of his estate: however young the son might be, he was to be taken from his father's hands and confided to the care of a Protestant relation. The estate of a Papist, who had no Protestant heir, was to be divided equally among his sons. The Papist was declared incapable of purchasing real estate or of taking land on lease for more than thirty-one years. A Papist was declared incapable of inheriting real estate from a Protestant. He was disqualified from holding any office, civil or military. With twenty exceptions, a Papist was forbidden to reside in Limerick or Galway. Advowsons the property of Papists were vested in the Crown.[2]

The 'ferocious Acts of Anne.'

Religious intolerance had now apparently done its uttermost. When a Papist was deprived of every office; when he was forbidden to educate his own children; when he was debarred from purchasing real estate; when premiums were placed on the apostasy of his sons; when it was illegal for him to follow a profession, to act as a magistrate, to carry a gun, or to ride a horse fit for a gentleman to ride, zealous Protestants might be pardoned for thinking that the power of Rome in Ireland was crushed out for ever. But the laws failed. Their severity insured their failure. All the devices of which the law is capable were employed to defeat the object of

[1] 9th William III., c. 3; 10th William III., c. 13; 10th William III., c. 8. Parnell, p. 20.

[2] Acts passed in the same session ordered the registry of all Popish clergy, and prevented Popish clergy coming into the kingdom. 2ad Anne, cc. 3, 6, and 7. See also 4th Anne, c. 2; 6th Anne, cc. 6, 16, and 8th Anne, c. 3.

the Legislature; and the first of the ferocious Acts of Anne was almost openly disregarded. Its failure might have taught a less intolerant generation that they were aiming at an impossible and unjustifiable object. Its failure only induced the intolerant advisers of Anne to supplement it with harsher legislation. The Act of 1704 had deprived the Papist of the guardianship of his apostate child. An Act of 1709 empowered the Court of Chancery to oblige the Papist to discover his estate, and authorised the Court to make an order for the maintenance of the apostate child out of the proceeds of it. The Act of 1704 had made it illegal for a Papist to take lands on lease; the Act of 1709 disabled him from receiving a life annuity. An Act of 1704 had compelled the registry of priests. The Act of 1709 forbade their officiating in any parish except that in which they were registered. These, however, were the least reprehensible features in the Act of 1709. Its worst features were the encouragement which it gave to the meaner vices of human nature. The wife of a Papist, if she became a Protestant, was to receive a jointure out of her husband's estate. A Popish priest abandoning his religion was to receive an annuity of 30*l.* a year. Rewards were to be paid for 'discovering' Popish prelates, priests, and schoolmasters. Two justices might compel any Papist to state on oath where and when he had heard mass, who had officiated at it, and who had been present at it. Encouragement was thus given to informers; bribes were thus held out to apostates; and Parliament trusted to the combined effects of bribery and intimidation to stamp out the last remnant of Popery.

The penal laws of George I. and II.

The penal code, however, was not yet complete; the armoury of intolerance was not yet exhausted. An Act of George I. disabled Papists from serving in the Irish militia, but compelled them to find Protestant substitutes; to pay double towards the support of the militia,

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and rendered their horses liable to seizure for militia purposes.[1] By Acts of George II. the Papists were disfranchised; barristers or solicitors marrying Papists were deemed Papists; all marriages between Protestants and Papists were annulled; and Popish priests celebrating any illegal marriages were condemned to be hanged.[2] By an Act of George III. Papists refusing to deliver up or declare their arms were liable to be placed in the pillory or to be whipped, as the Court should think proper.[3] Such were the laws which the intolerance of a minority imposed on the majority of their fellow-subjects. Utterly unjust, they had not even the bare merit of success. Witty Roman Catholics, like Mr. Myers, of Roscommon, became Protestants, pleading as 'the grounds' of their conversion '2,500 acres of the best grounds in the county of Roscommon.' Protestants, with more honesty than their representatives in Parliament, became trustees for their Roman Catholic acquaintances, discharging their trust with a fidelity which won the admiration of their political opponents.[4] These, however, were isolated instances. 'The great body of the people,' wrote Arthur Young, 'stripped of their all, were more enraged than converted: they adhered to the persuasion of their forefathers with the steadiest and the most determined zeal; while the priests, actuated by the spirit of a thousand inducements, made proselytes among the common Protestants in defiance of every danger. And the great glaring fact yet remains, and is even admitted by the warmest advocates of the laws of discovery, that the Established religion has not gained upon the Catholic in point of numbers; on the contrary, that the

[1] 2nd George I., c. 9.

[2] 1st George II., c. 9.; 7th George II., c. 5.; 19th George II., c. 13.; 23rd George II., c. 10.

[3] 15th and 16th George III., c. 21. The foregoing statement does not exhaust the category of the penal laws. It instances only the most remarkable of them.

[4] See, for both statements, Daunt's *Recollections of O'Connell*, vol. i. pp. 175–178.

latter has been rather on the increase. I have conversed on the subject with some of the most distinguished characters of the kingdom, and I cannot after all but declare that the scope, purport, and aim of the laws of discovery, as executed, are not against the Catholic religion, which increases under them, but against the industry and property of whoever professes that religion. In vain has it been said that consequence and power follow property, and that the attack is made in order to wound the doctrine through its property. If such was the intention, I reply, that seventy years' experience proves the folly and futility of it. Those laws have crushed all the industry and wrested most of the property from the Catholics; but the religion triumphs; it is thought to increase. The system pursued in Ireland has had no other tendency but that of driving out of the kingdom all the personal wealth of the Catholics, and prohibiting their industry within it. The face of the country, every object, in short, which presents itself to the eye of a traveller, tells him how effectually this has been done. I urge it not as an argument, the whole country speaks it as a fact.' [1]

It is impossible to understand the history of 1828 and 1829 without an accurate knowledge of the penal laws. The best answer, which it is possible to give to the few persons who still doubt the expediency of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, is the bare enumeration of the laws from which they were freed. The work of emancipation had, however, begun before the reign of George IV. In England the Dissenters were the first who were relieved from their grievances. The chapels had already been opened by the Toleration Act; but the Test Act still imposed a sacramental test on all place-holders. The law, however, was commonly disregarded, and Dissenters were frequently admitted to office. In the reigns

[1] Arthur Young, *Tour in Ireland*, Dublin, 1780, vol. ii. part ii. pp. 46, 49, 138.

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of George I. and George II. four Acts were passed protecting Dissenters who had violated the provisions of the Test Act. In 1747 the Dissenters were granted 'a full and free pardon' for disobeying the law, and by their disobedience rendering essential service to the State. The principle of the Act of 1747 was continued till 1828. An indemnity Act was annually passed, by which 'good men were forgiven for having done good service to their country.' Parliament was less ready to grant relief to the Roman Catholic than to the Protestant. The generation which had carried the Act of 1747 passed away before the Roman Catholics of England were relieved from any of the disabilities which had been imposed on them after the Revolution.

First measures of relief.

Sir George Savile was one of the great men to whom Englishmen are indebted for the liberties which they now enjoy. His name is associated with those of Dunning and Burke in the memorable stand made against the prerogative of the Crown during the earlier years of the reign of George III. He had the great merit in 1778 of obtaining the repeal of the Act of William III., which made it illegal for a Popish priest to perform the services of his church, or for a Roman Catholic layman to purchase or inherit real estate. This mild measure of relief produced a memorable result. A rumour that its operation would be extended to Scotland threw the country into a ferment. A fanatic young nobleman, exciting the passions of the mob, persuaded them to collect in thousands for the purpose of petitioning Parliament. A riot ensued, which the Government, the Legislature, and the country had deep cause for remembering. Conflagrations were kindled in every part of London; the streets of the metropolis ran red with blood; and scenes which were only paralleled during the Revolution in France were enacted in the heart of London. Military measures, too long delayed, were at last taken by the Government,

and order was at length restored. But riot had done its work. Fifteen years elapsed before the partial measure of justice conceded to the Roman Catholics of England was extended to the Roman Catholics of Scotland.[1]

Before, then, the conclusion of the eighteenth century the Roman Catholics of Great Britain had been relieved of the disabilities affecting their property and the exercise of their religion. But the Act of William still prevented them from exercising the elective franchise; the Act of Charles II. made it impossible for them to sit in either House of Parliament. The Test Act debarred them from holding any office. In the meanwhile similar concessions had been made to the Irish Roman Catholics. But the privileges which had been conceded to them confer little credit on the English nation. The North American Colonies rebelled against the mother country. Every available regiment was hurried off to America; and the combined fleets of France and Spain rode unopposed in British waters, and insulted and terrified the coasts of the United Kingdom. England, unable to spare troops to protect Ireland from invasion, was compelled to authorise the enrolment of Irish Volunteers. A military force of one hundred thousand men, armed, accoutred and organised, convinced the rulers of Spain and France that a descent on Ireland was not only hazardous but impracticable. But the force, which had thus been enrolled for the defence of Ireland, was used by Irish patriots for other objects. In 1779 Grattan carried a memorable resolution in the Irish House of Commons that 'nothing but a free trade could save the country from ruin.' In 1782 he followed up his previous victory by persuading the House of Commons to resolve that 'no power on earth could make laws to bind Ireland except

The revolt of America and Grattan's resolutions.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1778, p. 189; 1780, pp. 254–287; 1793, pp. 147, 148. A suit was brought by a Protestant against a Roman Catholic in Scotland to deprive him of his estate under the penal laws.

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her own King, Lords, and Commons. The resolution of 1779 was carried to the Castle through streets lined with Volunteers. The resolution of 1782 was only passed after a formal convention of the Volunteers at Dungannon. England's need had been Ireland's opportunity: the greatest of her orators had used it to secure for his country a free trade and a free constitution.

Other concessions to Irish Roman Catholics.

Grattan's great victory had not been achieved in a moment. In the midst of its embarrassments the British Ministry had endeavoured to conciliate the Roman Catholics of Ireland. A few months before the American rebellion broke out a proposal had been made to allow the Roman Catholics to take lands on lease for sixty-one years. The proposal was rejected; the rebellion occurred; and an Act of 1778 was immediately passed authorising them to take lands on lease for 999 years. The disabilities, which prevented Papists from selling, or inheriting and devising real estate, were at the same time repealed; and the provisions which gave the apostate child of a Papist a maintenance out of his father's property were modified. Four years afterwards an Act of 1782 gave the Papists a right to purchase land, and repealed the laws which compelled the Papist to state on oath when and where he had heard mass celebrated; which forbade him from keeping a horse worth more than 5*l.*; which rendered his horse liable to seizure for militia service; and which prevented Papists from residing in Limerick and Galway. In the same year another Act was passed which enabled Roman Catholics, who were not ecclesiastics, to be guardians to children, and allowed them publicly and privately to act as tutors.[1]

The French Revolution

The Parliament of Ireland was willing enough to relieve its Roman Catholic fellow-subjects from these disabilities, but it did not desire to do much more. The Protestants

[1] 17th and 18th George III., c. 49; 21st and 22nd George III., cc. 62

enjoyed every office in the State; and were opposed to legislation which would deprive them of their monopoly of place. The events which were taking place on the Continent were, however, striking a fatal blow at the monopoly of minorities. In 1792 the Government found itself compelled to support a bill by which Roman Catholics were admitted to the Bar, by which the laws prohibiting the mixed marriages of Protestants and Roman Catholics were repealed, and by which Roman Catholics were allowed to send their sons to be educated abroad. This measure of partial justice was followed a year afterwards by a much greater measure of relief. In the autumn of 1792 a great convention of Roman Catholic delegates, elected from every parish in Ireland, drew up a statement of their grievances. In presence of this convention the Government found it necessary to give way. An Act was passed in 1793 by which Irishmen 'professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, or educating any of their children in that religion,' were relieved from 'any penalties, forfeitures, disabilities, or incapacities;' from 'any laws for the limitation, charging, or discovering of their estates and property, or touching the acquiring of property, save such as his Majesty's subjects of the Protestant religion are liable and subject to.' The same Act repealed the oaths required of electors, and enabled Roman Catholics to hold civil and military offices under the Crown. Certain exceptions were made to this wise and liberal measure. Roman Catholics were still precluded from sitting in either House of Parliament; they were still excluded from the highest offices in the Judicature, in the Administration, and in the army; and Roman Catholics having less than 100*l.* a year in land, or having less than 1,000*l.* personalty, were precluded from wearing arms. But the Act of 1793 had swept away the most prominent disabilities of which the Roman Catholics had complained, and had placed them

leads to further concessions,

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on a nominal equality with their Protestant fellow-subjects.[1]

which were much greater than those made to Roman Catholics in Great Britain,

The relief which had thus been afforded to the Roman Catholics of Ireland was, in fact, much greater than that which had been granted to the Roman Catholics of Great Britain. In Ireland the army was open to a Roman Catholic, and he could rise to any rank in the service below that of a general officer. Every rank in the army was shut against the English or Scotch Roman Catholic. In Ireland a Roman Catholic could be made a justice of the peace; in Great Britain he was excluded from the magistracy. In Ireland every Roman Catholic, duly qualified, could take part in a Parliamentary election; in Great Britain votes were refused to Roman Catholics. The Irish Roman Catholic could serve on a corporation; the English Roman Catholic was precluded from doing so.[2] The Irish Roman Catholic might graduate in any university, except Trinity College, Dublin; the English Roman Catholic was excluded from every English university. The Irish Roman Catholic, therefore, enjoyed several privileges of which the English Roman Catholic was deprived. If an English Roman Catholic desired to enter the army he had, in the first place, to cross St. George's Channel, and to obtain a commission on the Irish Establishment.[3] Ireland had no navy; and the British navy, therefore, had the singular advantage of being saved from the presence of even a solitary midshipman professing the Roman Catholic religion.

and consequently produced fresh difficulties after the Union,

The distinction which was thus established in the treatment of Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland would, under any circumstances, have been inde-

[1] The Act of 1792 was the 32nd George III., c. 21. The Act of 1793 was the 33rd George III., c. 21.

[2] It ought, for the sake of accuracy, to be observed that the relief of the Irish Roman Catholic was conditional on his taking certain oaths. But there was nothing in these oaths which Roman Catholics objected to take; so that the relief was in reality complete.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. pp. 651, 1054.

fensible; but the difference became much more marked after the formal union of the two countries. Men like Lord Eldon and Lord Sidmouth sincerely believed that the admission of the Roman Catholics to all the privileges which the Protestants enjoyed would be fatal to the existence of the Established Church; but neither Lord Eldon nor Lord Sidmouth could by any possibility prove that it was safe to make an Irish Roman Catholic, and unsafe to make an English Roman Catholic, a justice of the peace or an officer in the army. Relief, in short, had been either carried too far or had not gone far enough. The circumstances under which the Union had been effected made it, moreover, necessary to go further. It is not requisite in these pages to describe the method by which the Union was accomplished, or the means by which a small majority for the measure was gradually secured. Every available vote was of the last importance to Pitt's Ministry; and the influence of the Roman Catholics, commanding as they did nearly every constituency, was of the greatest consequence to the Government. The Roman Catholics, however, naturally regarded the Union from their own standpoint. They were in favour of the Union, if it would promote their own cause; they were opposed to it, if it would perpetuate their exclusion from Parliament and from the highest offices in the State; and they sounded the Irish Government on the subject, and endeavoured to obtain some distinct pledge upon it. The Irish Government sent to London for instructions. It was directed to reply that 'the opinion of the Cabinet was favourable to the principle of the measure; that some doubt was entertained as to the possibility of admitting Catholics into some of the higher offices; and that ministers anticipated considerable repugnance to the measure in many quarters, and particularly in the highest; but that, as far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, his Excellency need not hesitate in calling

which is supported by the Irish Roman Catholics on a promise of relief.

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forth the Catholic support in whatever degree he found it practicable to obtain it.' 'In consequence of this communication the Irish Government omitted no exertion to call forth the Catholics in favour of the Union. Their efforts were very generally successful.' The Lord Lieutenant 'was enabled to accomplish his purpose without giving the Catholics any direct assurance of being gratified, and throughout the contest earnestly avoided being driven to such an expedient, as he considered a gratuitous concession infinitely more consistent with the character of Government.' But he never doubted that the concession would be made. The moment that the Union was carried he recalled the attention of his Majesty's ministers to the question, and impressed on them 'the anxiety he felt that they should not suffer themselves to be anticipated in the purposed act of grace by the Opposition.'[1] There can hardly, therefore, be a doubt that the Cabinet, the Lord Lieutenant, and the Irish Roman Catholics understood that the Union of the two countries would be followed by a complete measure of relief: it is hardly possible to doubt that the support of the Roman Catholics was secured on this understanding.

Relief is refused by the king.

The circumstances under which the intention of Pitt was defeated, and the promises of the Irish Government falsified, are well known. The king heard with sincere alarm the rumours of his minister's promises. He fancied that his dynasty was in some way or other dependent on the perpetual incapacity of his Roman Catholic subjects; he thought that his coronation oath formally pledged him to refuse any concessions. A Solemn Treaty, concluded with the Roman Catholics, had not prevented William III. from assenting to the numerous acts of oppression which distinguished his reign. Unfortunately, however, a diseased mind made George III. cling to his

[1] These extracts are from Lord Castlereagh's letter to Pitt, dated 1st of January, 1801. See Alison's *Castlereagh*, vol. i. pp. 130–1.

oath with a tenacity which William III. would have laughed at. Pitt saw that it was impossible to convince the king; it was unluckily too plain that the sovereign's reason depended on the minister's forbearance, and Pitt accordingly gave way. His resignation, essentially creditable to himself, paved the way for the succession of a purely Protestant Ministry. It threw back the Roman Catholic question for a quarter of a century.

The position of the Roman Catholic question from 1801 to 1812.

During the eleven years which intervened between the resignation of Pitt and the commencement of the unrestricted Regency the position of the Roman Catholic question may be very briefly stated. The king was supposed to be the chief obstacle to relief; and nearly every leading public man was under a silent pledge to refrain from raising the question during his Majesty's life. The only occasion on which a different course was pursued furnished a remarkable proof of the strength of the king's determination. By the Act of 1793 a Roman Catholic gentleman had been permitted to enter the army in Ireland; but a Roman Catholic could not receive an officer's commission in Great Britain. There was some doubt whether a Roman Catholic entering a regiment in Ireland could legally serve with his own regiment in Great Britain, and the Talents Administration decided on settling the matter by legislation. The king reluctantly gave his consent to a limited measure of this description. But the Ministry either misunderstood the nature of the king's assent or thought that it might be possible to induce him to go a little further. The limited proposal which they had originally made was extended into a bill opening every rank in the army and in the navy to Roman Catholics, and allowing the Roman Catholics in these services the free exercise of their religion. The consequences of this extension ought to have been foreseen. For the first time since 1801 a Ministry had violated the virtual understanding that the

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Roman Catholic question should not be raised during the king's lifetime. The king, in serious alarm, threw himself into the hands of the Opposition. A new Ministry, pledged to resist the Roman Catholic claims, was formed by the Duke of Portland. An appeal was made to the country on the cry of 'No Popery;' and a strongly Protestant Parliament was returned by the constituencies. The Talents Administration had done more than the resignation of Pitt to postpone and defeat the claims of the Roman Catholics.[1]

With this single exception no serious steps were taken to relieve the Roman Catholics from their disabilities during the eleven years which elapsed from the resignation of Pitt to the commencement of the unrestricted Regency. Soon after the Union, indeed, Grattan became a member of the English Parliament. In 1804, and in many subsequent years, he brought the position of the Roman Catholics before the House of Commons. He exhibited on these occasions all the eloquence and all the ability which had distinguished him in the previous century in Dublin. But nothing came, and nothing was expected to come, of these debates. The button was on the foil; and Grattan knew as well as any member of the Cabinet that, while George III. lived, nothing would be done. Though, however, nothing was done, continual debates gradually altered the complexion of the question. During the earlier portion of the period the advocates of the Roman Catholics endeavoured to prove that relief might be granted on conditions which would protect the Established Church. During the latter portion of it the Roman Catholics rejected all conditions and insisted on unqualified concessions. 'Every discussion,' in the words of a frightened member of the Government, 'was in reality mischievous. Something more dangerous appeared

[1] The bill introduced in 1807 will be found in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1807, p. 421.

in each debate, and, in the last, the repeal of the Tests was boldly asked for all Dissenters in the United Kingdom, and all the Roman Catholics desire was demanded for the English Catholics.'[1]

In the autumn of 1810 George III. became, for a second or third time, deranged in his mind. The Ministry, hoping almost against hope for his recovery, made provisional arrangements for carrying on the Government during his illness. His eldest son was invested with the Regency of the kingdom; but various restrictions were imposed upon him, which did not expire till the commencement of 1812. Their expiration naturally induced the Roman Catholics to hope that relief would at last be afforded them. The politicians who were supposed to enjoy the confidence of the Regent were known to be in favour of almost unlimited concessions, and it was naturally inferred that the Regent himself shared the views of his most intimate political friends. The Regent's views on the subject were, indeed, only of comparatively slight importance. Good men might hesitate to disregard the conscientious opinions of an old and virtuous king, but no one was likely to pay much attention to the religious scruples of a profligate prince. An excellent character had enabled George III. to exercise an almost boundless influence on every religious question; but the Regent's variable and unfortunate disposition deprived him of all influence on the subject. The time had once more arrived when the claims of the Roman Catholics were to be debated by statesmen, instead of being decided by the whims of a sovereign. At this precise moment the party in the Cabinet which was opposed to concession was deprived of its leader; and in reconstructing the Administration Lord Liverpool was compelled to make the emancipation of the Roman Catholics an open question, and to entrust the lead of the House

The Regency.

[1] Wellesley Pole, in *Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 249.

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of Commons to Lord Castlereagh, who was in favour of concession.

The alteration in the position of the question was soon manifest. Early in 1812, before the reconstruction of the Administration under Lord Liverpool, a proposal to take the claims of the Roman Catholics into consideration was defeated by 174 votes to 102 in the House of Lords, and by 300 votes to 215 in the House of Commons.[1] Late in the same session, after the reconstruction of the Ministry, Canning proposed that the House should resolve early in the following session 'to take into its most serious consideration the state of the laws affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland,' and the motion was carried by the decisive majority of 235 to 106. A similar motion made in the House of Lords during the following week was only lost by 126 votes to 125, or by a majority of 1.[2] Seventeen years elapsed before the Roman Catholics obtained a more favourable division in the Upper House of Parliament.

In the autumn of 1812 Parliament was dissolved. Strictly speaking the new Parliament was not pledged by the proceedings of its predecessors. But, at the commencement of the session of 1813, Grattan moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the Roman Catholic claims. A long debate, protracted over four days, ensued, and Grattan's motion was ultimately carried by 264 votes to 224.[3] A motion in committee, that 'it was highly advisable to provide for the removal of the civil and military disqualifications under which his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects now labour,' was carried by 186 votes to 119;[4] and on the 30th of April Grattan introduced a bill to give effect to the resolution. The bill substituted a new oath for the oaths of allegiance, abjuration, and supremacy, and the declaration

Grattan's action in 1813.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1812, Hist., p. 66.
[2] Ibid., p. 120.
[3] Ibid., 1813, p. 28.
[4] Ibid., p. 30.

against transubstantiation and the invocation of saints. The new oath contained a promise of allegiance to the king and of support to the Protestant succession; a renunciation of the temporal jurisdiction of the Pope; a declaration of disbelief in the Pope's infallibility; a disavowal of any intention to disturb the Established Church. A Roman Catholic taking this oath was to be at liberty to sit and vote in either House of Parliament; to hold, with one or two exceptions, any civil or military office; and to be a member of any lay body corporate. Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were to be subject to further legislation. No person born out of the United Kingdom, or not residing within it, was to be eligible for any episcopal function; and every Roman Catholic clergyman was to take an oath that he would never consent to the appointment of any bishop 'but such as he shall deem to be of unimpeachable loyalty and peaceable conduct;' and that he would have no correspondence or communication with the Pope or his tribunals except on ecclesiastical matters.

Such was the measure of relief introduced by Grattan in 1813. In its progress through the House of Commons Canning announced his intention of engrafting upon it certain amendments with the object of providing for the appointment of proper persons as bishops. Commissioners were to be appointed, both in Great Britain and Ireland, to whom the name of every person proposing to assume the functions of a bishop or dean was to be notified. The commissioners were to report on the nominations thus made to them; and the king or the lord lieutenant was to be at liberty, on their report, to allow or disallow the nomination. The amendments which were thus introduced created considerable consternation among the Roman Catholic hierarchy. But the House of Commons had no opportunity of pronouncing an opinion upon them. Almost immediately after their proposal the Speaker took the opportunity of the bill being in com-

The Speaker carries a clause ex-

CHAP. VIII. 1813.

mittee to move that the Roman Catholics should have every privilege except that of sitting and voting in Parliament. The Speaker's authority was so great that his amendment was carried by 251 votes to 247. A small majority of four had robbed the bill of its chief virtue, and its promoters declined to proceed with a measure which was no longer regarded as worth having.[1]

cluding the Catholics from Parliament.

For the second time in two consecutive years the Roman Catholics had been doomed to disappointment; and their disappointment was the greater, because their victory had seemed secure. The majority by which they had been defeated, however, was so small that they did not despair of reversing the decision of the House of Commons in a future session. This result seemed so probable that the members of the Established Church were seriously alarmed. Societies were formed in London and the provinces to maintain the ascendancy of the Protestant religion; and petitions with this object were presented to Parliament from thousands of parishes. The alarm which the Protestants professed to feel would not, however, of itself have defeated the designs of Grattan. The worst enemies to the claims of the Roman Catholics at this juncture were the Roman Catholics themselves. The Catholic Board in London, indeed, bitterly regretting that 'hopes so nearly realised are still to be deferred,' passed an admirable resolution pledging themselves to continue their efforts to procure relief, and expressing their conviction 'that the day is near at hand when every jealousy and every animosity on account of opinions purely religious will be buried in eternal oblivion.' But the Catholic Board in Dublin, instead of imitating the wise example of their co-religionists in London, declared that the bill was imperfect and inadequate; and actually consented to discuss the propriety of re-

The bill abandoned.

Agitation against their claims,

and proceedings of the Catholic Board,

[1] *v.* 1813, Hist., p. 34. *Colchester*, vol. ii. p. 447.

questing the Spanish Cortes to interfere in their behalf.[1] The folly of the Catholic Board in Dublin was exceeded by the folly of the Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland. They thought the ecclesiastical clauses 'incompatible with the discipline of the Roman Catholic Church,' and they issued a pastoral letter declaring that they could not accede to the bill without incurring the guilt of schism, and that the ecclesiastical clauses 'have not, and, in their present shape, never can have, our concurrence.'[2] It was in vain that the authorities at Rome themselves interfered and endeavoured to persuade the Irish bishops to accept the measure. The least tolerant among the Catholic Board repudiated the notion that 'the slaves at Rome' were entitled to advise them. The more tolerant among them regretted the intemperate conduct of their colleagues; and differences, in consequence, arose among the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, at the very moment at which every Roman Catholic should have been ready to make any reasonable sacrifice for union.[3]

The effect of these differences was soon visible. In 1813 the Roman Catholics had been on the very point of securing a victory. In 1814 no one was found to bring their claims before Parliament. In 1813 the House of Commons had resolved by 264 votes to 224 to take the claims of the Roman Catholics into consideration. The same House of Commons in 1815 rejected a similar motion by 228 votes to 147. The number opposed to the Roman Catholic claims was almost the same on each occasion. But the Roman Catholics were only able to muster 117 fewer votes in 1815 than in 1813. In 1813 Grattan had been their unflinching advocate; in 1815 he told them plainly that the failure of their cause was due to their own imprudence and indiscretion.[4] The divisions of the Catholic Board, and the pretensions of the Roman

which led to the rejection of the Roman Catholic claims.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1813, pp. 100, 101.
[2] Ibid., Chron., p. 349.
[3] Ibid., 1814, Hist., pp. 216, 217.
[4] Ibid., 1815, Hist., p. 30.

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Catholic prelates, had robbed the Roman Catholics of their victory at the time at which their success was apparently secured.

The Parliament of 1818.

In 1818 the Parliament of 1812 was dissolved.[1] The Parliament which was elected in 1818 had only a short existence; but a fresh attempt was made, in the session of 1819, to secure consideration for the Roman Catholics. The occasion was a memorable one. It was the last on which the great Irish orator was to plead the cause with which his memory is chiefly identified. It was almost the last occasion on which his voice was heard in the House of Commons. He obtained for a seconder one of the ablest members of the Ministry—Croker, the Secretary to the Admiralty; and Canning and Castlereagh, the two most prominent members of the Cabinet, were present to support him.

The debate, however, which took place on Grattan's motion was not quite worthy of the occasion. It was generally expected that it would have been adjourned, and some of the most prominent members of the House accordingly reserved their speeches. But the House had rarely been so full. The great majority of the members desired to bring the discussion to a close, and at one o'clock in the morning the debate ended. 242 members voted with Grattan; 248 members against him. One of the tellers, however, remarked that some members had irregularly entered the House after the question had been put, and insisted that their votes should be disallowed. In this way the majority was reduced to 243, the minority to 241. The Roman Catholics had been defeated by two votes. The majority was small; but small as it was

[1] There were great debates in 1817 on the subject in both Houses. —*Hansard*, vol. xxxvi. pp. 301–442, 600-678. In 1813 a bill (53rd of George III., c. 128) was carried enabling Irish Roman Catholics to hold in England all such offices as they were entitled to hold in Ireland. In 1817 'the Military and Naval Officers' Oaths Bill virtually opened all ranks in the army and navy to Roman Catholics and Dissenters.'—57th Geo. III., c. 92.

it was sufficient to influence the attitude of the Lords. The majority of the Peers were indisputably opposed to concession; but a good many of the Peers knew that it was hopeless to resist the decision of the House of Commons. In 1813, when Canning had carried his motion by a majority of 129, the Peers were almost equally divided—126 votes to 125. On that occasion 251 Peers had taken part in the division, either personally or by proxy. 253 Peers took part in the division in 1819; but the majority against the Roman Catholics had increased to 41. 147 Peers voted against the motion, and only 106 in its favour.[1]

Death of Grattan.

In a little more than a year after this division Grattan died. Determined to signalise the commencement of a new reign by a fresh debate on the same old subject, he set out from Ireland for London in the summer of 1820. His physicians in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from the journey. Twenty years before, when almost equally enfeebled by illness, he had made the same journey in the contrary direction to protest against the Union in the last Irish Parliament. On that memorable occasion, when too ill to stand, he had made some of the greatest of the many great speeches which distinguished his long career. But twenty years had lessened his capacity for performing work and enduring fatigue. 'He travelled by slow and painful stages,' and he reached London only to die. His death deprived the Roman Catholics of their warmest, their most persevering, their most eloquent advocate. If in Grattan's lifetime, and with the aid of Grattan's voice, they had failed, they might well despair of success when their champion was gone.

Happily, however, great causes do not depend on the single lives of isolated politicians. The statesman who devotes his life to resisting the stream of popular

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. pp. 6–79, 386–448.

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progress may be certain that when he is gone the flood will flow on. The statesman who aims at directing the current may fail during his own lifetime, but may confidently anticipate that the force of the tide will ultimately win its way. The death of Castlereagh was followed by a revolution in the foreign policy of this country; the death of Ellenborough by the reform of the Criminal Code; the death of Liverpool by the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Happier far has been the lot of the statesmen who resisted the measures of these men. The death of Romilly hardly delayed for a day the acceptance of his principles; the death of Canning was succeeded by the independence of Greece; the death of Grattan by the emancipation of the Roman Catholics.

Nothing, indeed, was done in 1820 to promote the Roman Catholic cause. Parliament, busily occupied with the conduct of a queen, had no leisure for considering the grievances of subjects. A year of the new reign passed without anything being done. But in the beginning of the session of 1821 the affair of the queen was finally settled, and Parliament was again able to attend to its ordinary business. On the 28th of February, 1821, the claims of the Roman Catholics were brought before the House of Commons. The Roman Catholics had the good fortune to secure a champion whose eloquence was almost as brilliant as that of Grattan. William Plunket, the son of a Unitarian minister, was born at Enniscorthy, near Dublin, in 1765. He was educated for the Bar, and succeeded in establishing the greatest forensic reputation which any Irishman has ever enjoyed. In 1807, after acting as Attorney-General for Ireland, he was returned to Parliament for the small borough of Midhurst; and in 1812 he was selected to represent the University of Dublin. Short in stature, with an ungainly figure, he was one of the most brilliant speakers in an age of oratory. No member of the House of Commons

William Plunket.

had a more masterly grasp of his subject. No other orator could illustrate his meaning more happily, or win closer attention by the earnestness of his manner.[1] Plunket's ability naturally marked him out as Grattan's successor. But Plunket's political opinions made him also a peculiarly eligible champion for the Roman Catholics. He had attached himself to the cause of Lord Grenville. He was, therefore, a member of the small but influential body which had not entirely severed its connection with the Opposition, but was slowly gravitating towards the Tory Government. Plunket, like Lord Grenville, had defended the conduct of the Ministry on the occasion of the Manchester riots; like Lord Grenville, he had supported the Six Acts; like nearly every other Irishman of distinction, he was warmly in favour of the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities.

His action in 1821.

On the 28th of February, 1821, Plunket made the usual motion that the House should resolve itself into a committee to consider the claims of the Roman Catholics. His speech was singularly eloquent and able. But the subject was already exhausted. Everything that could be urged on either side of the question had been repeated over and over again; and the debate therefore came to a rapid conclusion. By a majority of 6—227 votes to 221—the House resolved itself into a committee. The Roman Catholics had not obtained so great a victory for six years. Two days afterwards Plunket followed up his success by proposing six resolutions in committee. The two first resolutions pointed to the repeal of all declarations required to be made against transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, and the sacrifice of the mass. The four last resolutions pointed to either the explanation or the repeal of the word 'spiritual' in the passage of the oath of supremacy, affirming 'that no foreign

[1] See the *Ann. Reg.* for 1854, where there is an excellent biographical notice of Plunket.

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prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within these realms.' On the 7th of March, Plunket introduced two bills based on these resolutions. The first of these bills removed every disability from the Roman Catholics, and opened to them every office, except the Chancellorship of England and the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. The second of them gave the Crown a veto on the appointment of a Roman Catholic bishop by the Pope; and exacted an oath from every Roman Catholic priest pledging him to concur in the appointment of no dignitary of his church except such as he should conscientiously deem to be of unimpeachable loyalty and peaceable conduct; and to have no correspondence with Rome 'on any matter or thing which may interfere with or affect the civil duty or allegiance which is due to his Majesty.'

The proposals which were thus made created a great diversity of opinion. Uncompromising Tories were of course alarmed at the progress which the Roman Catholic question was evidently making. Uncompromising Roman Catholics declared that the securities contained in the bills imposed intolerable restrictions on conscience. Politicians, incapable of raising themselves from an examination of the details of a measure to a consideration of its principles, occupied themselves in debating whether the Irish Chancellorship should or should not be added to the offices from which Roman Catholics were to be excluded, and whether the consent of the Crown to the appointment of each dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church should or should not be required. But, while little differences of this character existed on the details of the measures, a steady majority was agreed in supporting their principle. The second reading of the Relief Bill was carried on the 16th of March by 254 votes to 243. Plunket, who had distinguished himself at every

stage of the debate by his ability and moderation, was summoned to the deathbed of his wife in Ireland. But even Plunket's absence could not affect the progress of the bill. The new oath was carried in committee, on the 23rd of March, by 230 votes to 216. The proposal, which had wrecked the bill of 1813, that the Roman Catholics should be prevented from sitting in Parliament, was made, on the 26th of March, by Bankes, the member for Corfe Castle, and was rejected by 223 votes to 211; and finally, on the 2nd of April, after the two bills had been fused into one, the third reading was carried by 216 votes to 197.[1]

His bills pass the Commons,

The hopes of the Protestants, the fears of the Roman Catholics were now concentrated on the House of Lords. There was some reason for hoping that the Peers would give way. Everything, it was thought, would turn in that House on the wishes of the king; and it was anticipated that George IV. might, for once in his life, be in favour of freedom. It was whispered that Lady Conyngham—the reigning favourite at Court—was disposed to support the bill.[2] It was known that the king was contemplating a visit to Ireland; and it was shrewdly surmised that he would desire to take a measure of conciliation with him.[3] But there was a still stronger reason than these for the hopes of the Roman Catholics and the fears of the Protestants. The bill had been supported in the House of Commons by a small but steady majority; but the mere numbers, by which its success had been secured, afforded the least proof of the strength of its supporters. It was no exaggeration to say that every single member of the Government with any reputation for ability had supported the measure. It was no exag-

[1] The debates will be found in *Hansard*, vol. iv. pp. 961–1034, 1066, 1269–1314, 1412–1468, 1523–1548; an abstract of them in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, pp. 29–41. See also Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. pp. 129, 141.

[2] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 148.

[3] Ibid., p. 124.

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geration to say that, with one exception, every member of the House of Commons who had acquired any great position in debate had also supported it. The House of Lords, it might be thought, could hardly disregard the voice of a majority which had included Castlereagh and Canning, Palmerston and Robinson, Wilberforce and Charles Wynn, Brougham and Mackintosh, Plunket and Grant, Tierney and Croker. But there was unfortunately one distinction between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In the House of Commons every member of the Cabinet with any influence had supported the bill. In the House of Lords every member of the Government who had much weight in debate was opposed to it. Liverpool, Eldon, Wellington, and Sidmouth were unanimous in desiring to resist the claims of the Roman Catholics.

The resistance of ministers might have been overcome. The result of the debate, however, turned on the attitude of the Royal family; and the Royal family threw the weight of its influence into the scale of repression.

but are rejected by the Lords.

The second reading of the bill was fixed for the 16th of April; and, on the second night of the debate, the Duke of York rose to declare his sentiments upon it. Heir-presumptive to the throne of England, with only a sickly brother between himself and the crown, the duke spoke with an authority which ought to have deterred him from speaking at all. 'He was thoroughly convinced of the dangerous tendency of measures of this character; his opposition to them arose from principles which he had embraced ever since he had been able to judge for himself, and which he hoped he should cherish to the last day of his life.' His Royal Highness's declaration settled the business. 'It did more,' as Lord Eldon put it, 'to quiet the matter than everything else put together.' It was in vain that the example of the Duke of Sussex, who had spoken for the bill, could

be quoted on the other side. The Duke of Sussex was one of the youngest of the Regent's brothers, and had no more influence than any ordinary peer. The second reading was rejected by 159 votes to 120, or by a majority of 39. Enthusiastic Tories, incapable of forecasting the inevitable future, drank to the thirty-nine, 'who had saved the Thirty-nine Articles.'[1]

Changes in the Government.

The common rumours of the day, which were current in every direction, might, indeed, have abated the confidence of the extreme Tories. It was known that Lord Liverpool desired to strengthen his Ministry; and it was certain that every addition to its strength would weaken the Protestant party in the Cabinet. No one could doubt that a Ministry which bought the Grenvilles at an extravagant price was not prepared to make any very stout resistance to the Roman Catholic claims. The impression which was thus produced was partially effaced by the subsequent appointment of Peel as Lord Sidmouth's successor at the Home Office, and of Goulburn as Chief Secretary for Ireland. There was no doubt, at that time, of the firmness with which Peel was determined to oppose every concession to the Roman Catholics. Goulburn had taken a prominent part in resisting Plunket's bill. There was a true ring about these appointments which satisfied extreme Tories.

The king's visit to Ireland.

In the meanwhile the king paid his memorable visit to Ireland. The best results were anticipated from his Majesty's presence in Dublin; and the cordiality of his manner and the enthusiasm of his reception seemed to justify and confirm these anticipations. With all his grievous faults George IV. had considerable power in commending himself to those with whom he was thrown into close communication. Everyone who was admitted to the dinner-table either of Carlton House or the

[1] Twiss's *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 416. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 229–264, 279–358. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, p. 43.

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Pavilion was won by the king's grace and courtesy. No two men were more unlike the king than Wilberforce and Sir Walter Scott. Yet the great philanthropist forgot all the king's faults in the pleasure of his society; and the great novelist almost succeeded in persuading himself that the king was an excellent sovereign. It was probably a greater effort to George IV. to entertain Wilberforce or Scott than to *pose* in a Stuart kilt in Edinburgh, or to drink the health of his Irish subjects in bumpers of usquebaugh in Dublin. It was probably a relief to his feelings to throw off all etiquette and to shake hands with the hundreds of his subjects who swarmed round his carriage and thought none the worse of him because his wife was only just dead and he himself was half-intoxicated. Never had Ireland appeared so loyal or so happy as during the king's visit. The sunshine of sovereignty had apparently dispelled the clouds of discontent which had enveloped the unhappy island. The clouds, however, occasionally return when the summer sun sets. Disaffection was renewed when the king's presence was withdrawn.

which is followed by disturbance.

Disorder was, unfortunately, no new feature in the history of Ireland. For one hundred and twenty years the utter lawlessness of the population had been the terror and the disgrace of the English Government, and had made all prospects of improvement impossible. No real effort had ever been made either to enforce the law or preserve the peace. Parliament had disabled the Roman Catholics from acquiring real property. So far back as 1711 the wild highlanders of Galway had made it difficult for the Protestants to hold a farm by houghing their sheep and cattle. Parliament had resisted the conversion of pasture into arable land; and white figures, known as Whiteboys, had been seen at midnight on the hills of Tipperary, whose track could be traced by the blaze of burning homesteads or the moans of wounded cattle.

A great Protestant peer had the folly to impose a fine of 100,000*l.* on his Antrim tenantry as the price of renewing their leases; and the Hearts of Steel, or Oakboys, as they were sometimes called, had risen to attack or to intimidate the incoming tenants. Parliament had neglected to enforce the provisions which it had made for disarming the Roman Catholics; and bands of Protestants had scoured the country at break of day and stripped the inhabitants of their arms. Seen always in the dawn of early morning, they were generally known as the Peep-o'-day Boys. Parliament had forbidden mixed marriages between Protestants and Papists; and women with money had been constantly carried off into the hills and forced into marriage with a brutality which reminds the reader of the ways and manners of primitive man. Parliament had insisted that the Irish should only export their wool to England; and the bales had been sent to France, either openly or in armed smugglers, which the Revenue officers had not the power to seize. But the Government took no effectual measures to discover the Houghers; they took no effectual measures to discover the Whiteboys; they took no effectual measures to stop the smuggling; they hardly hanged a single abductor of women. They neither blamed Lord Donegal for exciting his Antrim tenantry, nor interfered with the Hearts of Steel for avenging themselves on the incoming tenants. This utter carelessness could only lead to one result. Rioters, constantly left unpunished, were encouraged to rebel. A determination to enforce order in 1790 might have averted the rebellion of 1798. A few severe examples might have saved Ireland the bloodshed with which the revolt was ultimately quelled.[1]

[1] Mr. Froude gives an excellent account of the disorders in Ireland in the eighteenth century. See especially vol. i. pp. 408–414, 417–434, 446–475; and vol. ii. p. 24. For derivation of Whiteboys see Musgrave's *Rebellions in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 36. For that of Peep-o'-day Boys, ibid., p. 62.

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Irish disorders.

From the time of the rebellion of 1798 to the date with which this history is at present concerned Irish discontent had only been held in check by legislation which it is difficult to justify. In 1800 the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and an Act for suppressing rebellion was passed; in 1802 these measures expired, but their expiration was followed by the riot in which Lord Kilwarden, the Chief Justice of Ireland, was unfortunately killed, and which is known in history as Emmet's rebellion. The Habeas Corpus Act was again suspended; and the Act for suppressing rebellion was again passed. These measures expired in 1806; but the west and south of Ireland were in such a state of insubordination that it was found necessary to send a special commission into the disturbed districts. In 1807 an Act, known as the Insurrection Act, was passed authorising the Lord Lieutenant to suspend trial by jury, and rendering persons out of doors between sunset and sunrise liable to transportation. The Insurrection Act remained in force till 1810, when it was repealed. Its repeal did not diminish the excitement which was the chronic condition of Ireland. In 1814 the Insurrection Act was re-enacted. It was continued in 1815, 1816, and in 1817.

Ever since the Union, therefore, the Irish Government had been almost constantly compelled to apply to Parliament for exceptional powers for the government of Ireland; and, notwithstanding the grant of these powers, Ireland had not been crushed into peace.[1] In 1816 a Cashel magistrate, who had made himself unpopular, was doomed to die by the self-constituted authorities who governed Ireland with terror. The population waited on housetops and ricks for the consummation of the catastrophe. The shot which caused the wretched

[1] This statement of the repressive legislation applied to Ireland from 1800 to 1817 is taken from Peel's speech in 1829. See *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 742.

victim's death was received with cheers. 13,000*l.* was offered as a reward for the conviction of a murderer who must have been known to the whole hillside. No information was forthcoming. One individual was arrested on suspicion, and offered a free pardon to confess. The prisoner's wife visited him in prison, and implored him on her knees to die before he told a word.[1]

The condition of the peasantry.

Ireland had not been crushed into peace, because the condition of the Irish peasantry was such that peace had become impossible. The population of Ireland exceeded 7,000,000; and the land, in the manner in which it was worked, was incapable of supporting this vast concourse of people. It was deliberately stated in 1825 that 1,000,000 persons obtained a living by mendicancy and plunder.[2] A Galway landlord declared that he received no rent from his estate, and that it would be hazarding an insurrection to attempt to displace the defaulting tenantry. On most estates, however, such prudence was unusual. The agent of a great Irish property said that it was the custom in Ireland to keep a person on each estate to distrain for rent. This person was so regularly occupied in driving cattle to pound that he was usually known as a driver.[3] The average rate of wages was estimated at only 4*d.* a day.[4] But an Irishman, as long as he could avoid it, never worked for hire. The great mass of the population were either cottier tenants or 40*s.* freeholders, maintaining themselves and their families on the produce of the little plot of ground which surrounded their miserable hovel, or which they hired, at an exorbitant rent, from their landlord. The land which they so hired, on what was known as the Conacre system, was only a quarter or half an acre; and the rent which they were commonly charged for it was at the rate of ten guineas an acre.[5]

[1] See Mr. Peel's speech in the House of Commons, 26th of April, 1816. *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 29.

[2] Lords' committee on the state of Ireland, 1825, p. 558.

[3] Commons' committee, 1825, p. 305.

[4] Ibid., p. 810.

[5] Ibid., p. 414.

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Grievous as were these conditions, the law made them more insupportable. The pasture land of Ireland was usually tithe-free, but the rector was entitled to insist on the prompt delivery to him of one-tenth of the potatoes which every cottier dug out of his little enclosure. The distinction was the more intolerable because the great grass farmer was usually a Protestant; the cottier was almost invariably a Roman Catholic. Subject to a rent which it was utterly impossible to pay; irritated by seeing a tithe of his potatoes swept away by a clergyman whose faith he did not share; with no adviser but a priest, who was indignant with the Penal Code; with an indistinct idea that he was entitled to the land of which the Saxon had dispossessed him, the cottier tenant of Ireland brooded over his wrongs and longed for the day of retribution.

Outrages in 1821.

A horrible outrage had been committed in Limerick before the king's visit. In March 1821 some ruffians attacked the house of a Mr. and Mrs. Torrance, in the immediate vicinity of Limerick, demanding that arms should be delivered to them. Mr. and Mrs. Torrance had the courage to refuse them. The house was successfully defended, and the ruffians withdrew. The success of the defence, however, made Limerick no place for the Torrances to reside in. They were advised to remove, and they decided on going to a farm at Adare, a little to the south-west of Limerick, in the same county. One Sunday evening in June, while quietly walking with his wife along a frequented pathway, Torrance was suddenly attacked by two fellows armed with sticks and stones. Mrs. Torrance rushed to her husband's assistance. A terrible struggle ensued. Mrs. Torrance was beaten and stabbed to death, and Torrance was barely able to crawl away alive.[1] This outrage occurred in June. On another Sunday, in the following October, a Mr. Going, who had lately been in command of the Limerick police, riding

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821., Chron., p. 190.

quietly from Limerick to Cappagh, was attacked by a body of armed men and shot dead. The money which he had with him was untouched; his watch was found on his body; while, within an hour of the crime, its completion was announced to the country by bonfires from all the hills and by a wild Irish yell of exultation from the villages.[1] Rathkeale is only a few miles from Adare. The Irish Privy Council, startled from their customary torpor, thought it necessary to proclaim the district. But the outrages continued to spread. The county of Tipperary marches with Limerick. In November, a month after Mr. Going's murder, Tipperary was the scene of a still more horrible crime. A farmer named Shea had evicted some cottiers who had declined to pay their rent either in money or, after the ordinary fashion of the Irish, in labour. In the middle of November Shea's house was attacked and fired by an armed banditti. Twelve people—Shea, his wife, his seven children, and three maid-servants—slept in the house. Five labourers occupied the adjoining offices. These wretched people, attempting to escape from the fire, were driven back by shots into the flames. The whole seventeen were burned to death.[2]

Alarm of the Government.

The Government were seriously alarmed at these terrible outrages. Winter was fast approaching; the south and west of Ireland were in a state of armed insurrection; and it was impossible to foretell what the long winter nights might bring forth. The generation was still alive which remembered the horrors of 1798, when an armed multitude, under the guidance of a priest, held undisputed sway over south-eastern Ireland; and threatened to advance on Dublin itself. Troops were hurriedly despatched into the disturbed districts. A special commission was appointed to try the offenders; and Molony and M'Namara, the murderers of Mrs.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, Chron., p. 156; and Hist., p. 129.
[2] Ibid., Chron., pp. 172, 173.

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Torrance, were hanged. Conciliation was at the same time resorted to. Lord Talbot, who had been Lord Lieutenant, was recalled; and Lord Wellesley, an Irishman by birth, and distinguished for his support of the Roman Catholic claims, was appointed to succeed him. Saurin, who had acted as Attorney-General for Ireland, was at the same time replaced by Plunket. It was supposed that these appointments might pave the way for a new system of government. It was hoped that the Roman Catholics might be encouraged to be peaceful, and that the Orangemen might cease to be disorderly. A new era of internal union and tranquillity, it was predicted, would dawn on the unhappy country which from time immemorial had been the scene of disorders, of outrages, and of rebellion.

Spread of the disorders.

The time was past when any mere change of men or measures could have accomplished such a result. The whole of Munster was in the possession of armed insurgents; and the Whiteboys, or the Rockites, as they began to be called, were acquiring fresh boldness, from the failure of the authorities to repress them. The insurrection spread, with alarming rapidity, through Limerick, Cork, and Tipperary. Night after night organised bands of ruffians attacked the principal houses in these districts, seized any arms or gunpowder which they found within them, and escaped with their spoil. The mail-coach from Cork to Killarney was attacked and seized in January; the return mail, sent on horseback, was intercepted by the insurgents, and the unfortunate man who carried the bags was barbarously murdered. The magistrates of Cork declared that they were utterly incapable of dealing with the insurrection, which was daily gaining strength. The country was defenceless. Individuals, however zealous they might be, could not be expected to leave their own houses and families exposed to attack, in order that they themselves might perform the duties of police; and the real police force was utterly

inadequate to cope with the armed bodies of the Whiteboys. From Clonakilty to Skibbereen, in Cork, a distance of sixteen miles, there was a crowded population and six policemen. From Skibbereen to Crookhaven the distance was twenty-four miles, and there were only eight policemen. Lord Bantry endeavoured to make a stand against the insurgents with a force which he hastily collected, but he was compelled to withdraw. A detachment of the Rifle Brigade, encountering another band of Whiteboys on the borders of Kerry and Cork, was only successful after a severe skirmish. Munster, in fact, was in a state of insurrection. It could only be dealt with as an insurgent province.[1]

Their horrible character.

Irish outrages have, unfortunately, always worn a horrible form. The outrages of 1821 and 1822 were, unhappily, no exception to the universal rule. A farmer in Tipperary had offended the Whiteboys. His cow was driven into a bog, where she perished; he sent his servant to remove its skin, and the man was shot in the middle of the day.[2] A clergyman in Cork let his tithes to his parishioners. An armed party entered the village, inquired of the farmers whether they had taken leases of tithes, and stripped and flogged those who had done so, 'for violating the orders of General Rock.'[3] Honorah Goold, a delicate girl, sixteen years of age, was taken from her brother's house by an armed party in the middle of the night, placed on horseback, carried away to a solitary house, and treated in a manner to which death would have been preferable. Twenty days passed away before the unhappy creature regained her liberty.[4] The coach from Limerick to Tipperary was stopped in broad daylight by an armed party, who took possession of another young girl, whose sole fault was the possession of a fortune of two hundred pounds. This girl was more

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 7–14; Chron., pp. 14, 15, 20.
[2] Ibid., p. 74.
[3] Ibid., p. 143.
[4] Ibid., p. 130.

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fortunate than Miss Goold. Her captors were pursued by the Tipperary police and compelled to drop their prize.[1]

Everyone acquainted with the history of Ireland was familiar with such occurrences as these. Those, however, who knew the country best had hoped that the perpetration of lawless acts had been checked by the authorities, and that the scenes with which Ireland had been familiar before the Union would not recur. They suddenly discovered that the Irish nature had not been altered by the suppression of the rebellion and the union with Great Britain; and that Irishmen, bent on revenging themselves on the Saxon, were still capable of cruelties which would have disgraced an African savage.

These outrages, rapidly succeeding the king's visit to Ireland, disappointed the expectations of courtiers and statesmen. The king had been persuaded that his presence in Ireland would be productive of very beneficial effects; and Ireland was more disturbed than she had been since the Union. The Irish Government naturally decided that their first duty in the crisis was to preserve order. With equal propriety they determined to take measures calculated to prevent the recurrence of disturbances. With the first object they applied to Parliament in 1822 to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act and to pass an Insurrection Act. They only asked that the measures should remain in force till the 1st of August. Five years before, the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended in Great Britain, in consequence of a riotous meeting in the neighbourhood of London. The danger in Ireland in 1822 was very different from the danger in Great Britain in 1817. Whiteboys, with guns in their hands, were more formidable adversaries than the Radicals. Captain Rock was a more unscrupulous opponent than General Ludd. In cases of extreme peril the

The action of the Irish Government.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Chron., p. 63.

Executive must necessarily be armed with exceptional powers; and it is difficult to see how the secret organisation of the Whiteboys could have been suppressed without a temporary infringement of some of the liberties of the people. Nothing but an extreme necessity can ever justify such a law as the Insurrection Act. Seven magistrates assembled in special sessions had the right to signify to the Lord Lieutenant that their county was disturbed. The Lord Lieutenant might thereupon proclaim the county, or part of it, to be in a disturbed state, or in danger of disturbance. Every person living in the district was compelled by law to remain in his house from sunset to sunrise. Any justice of the peace might enter any house at night and declare such of the inmates as were absent idle and disorderly persons. All persons found out of their usual places of abode, except on lawful business, between sunset and sunrise, were also to be considered idle and disorderly persons. All persons administering illegal oaths or demanding arms; all persons having offensive weapons in their possession and refusing to give them up; all persons, not being travellers, found in a public-house at night; all persons hawking or dispersing seditious papers or pamphlets were to be considered idle and disorderly. Idle and disorderly persons hawking or dispersing seditious papers or pamphlets were to be liable to twelve months' imprisonment. Idle and disorderly persons committing any of the other offences specified in the Insurrection Act were to be liable to transportation for seven years.

Two other measures—one of indemnity, the other of precaution—were proposed at the same time. The former indemnified all persons who, with a view to the preservation of peace, but without legal authority, had seized arms or ammunition since the preceding November. The latter, which was to remain in force for seven years, imposed some restrictions on the manufacture, importation, and sale of firearms and gunpowder. The Habeas

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Corpus Suspension Act and the Insurrection Act received the Royal assent early in the session of 1822, or on the 11th of February. The Indemnity Act and the Arms Act became law on the 11th of March. Armed with these powers, the Irish Government set itself seriously to the task of suppressing disorder. Troops were marched into the disaffected districts. The longer days of spring and summer facilitated the operations of the authorities. A severe example was made whenever evidence was forthcoming. Three hundred and sixty-six persons were charged at the Special Commission in Cork alone. Thirty-five were sentenced to death. Some of these were immediately executed; and the judge intimated that the fate of the remainder would depend on the future conduct of the peasantry. Resolute conduct of this description crushed Munster into order. But the Government did not feel able to dispense with the special machinery which they had demanded for preventing disturbance. Before the conclusion of the session they applied for the continuance of the Insurrection Act for another year. After some debate Parliament assented by a large majority to an application, which it would have been difficult for any legislature to have refused.[1]

The famine of 1822.

In the meanwhile the suppression of disturbance had been followed by another evil. The autumn of 1821 had been exceptionally wet; the potatoes in many cases had rotted in the ground; disorder had not assisted the industry of the agriculturist; and men who were busy in collecting arms had had no time to attend to their little holdings. At the commencement of 1822 the peasantry had a smaller store of food than usual. The store every day grew smaller and smaller. The price of potatoes rose steadily and ominously in the market, till a stone, which had usually been purchaseable for a penny or three halfpence, was not procurable for less than sixpence-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 22, 29, 41–44.

halfpenny. While the little stores of each cottier peasant held out no attention was paid to the imminence of the danger. The stores failed; the very roots which had been reserved for seed were consumed, and the wretched population of south-western Ireland was suddenly overwhelmed with famine. The men, leaving their miserable allotments, crowded into the villages, clamouring for work which no one was able to offer them. The middle classes of society, partly dependent on the purchases of the cottiers for their own livelihood, were in almost equal distress themselves. One-third of the inhabitants of Clare were reduced to a condition of starvation. Cork, Limerick, Mayo, Kerry, Roscommon, and Sligo were in a similar situation. The parish of Finloe contained 817 persons; 696 of these were in absolute want of food. In a parish in Clare the population, after mass, inquired what crimes were punishable by imprisonment, for they were willing to be sent to gaol for the sake of obtaining bread. At Tralee the poor were actually dying of starvation. It was no uncommon thing to see wretched persons fainting in the streets of Cork from mere want of food. Famine was attended by its constant helpmate, typhus. Fever had unfortunately been prevalent for years in parts of Ireland. The Irish members ascribed it to the window-tax, which induced the poor to close every opening in their houses, and to subsist without adequate means of ventilating their miserable dwellings. It was probably true that want of air aggravated a disease which penury and filth had originally encouraged. Positive famine rapidly increased its ravages among the distressed inhabitants of south-western Ireland. The fever hospitals were crowded with patients; the poor died in their wretched hovels of disease and want. Outrage and insurrection disappeared, and the miserable peasantry sank into the peace which is the result of utter exhaustion.

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Efforts to relieve it.

The Irish Government, and the English nation, did their duty nobly in the crisis. The fashionable world of London contrived to obtain some pleasure for its money, and gave a great ball at the King's Theatre, which produced 3,500*l.*, for the alleviation of the distress. As much as ten guineas was given for a ticket by persons who considered themselves well repaid for their outlay by the unparalleled splendour of the gay scene. In other repects, however, the ball was not a success. The great ladies of the world of fashion quarrelled amongst themselves. The Duchess of Richmond would not admit Lady Conyngham as patroness; and Lady Conyngham proved too strong for the duchess. These altercations were not decent. Some people doubted whether it were quite seemly to give a ball on the occasion at all. The fashionable world of London, it was thought, might have taken a better way of displaying its sympathy with Irish distress than by indulging itself with a display of unusual luxury and magnificence. Fortunately, London did something more than dance for the Irish famine. Relief committees were rapidly formed, and contributions, exceeding a quarter of a million, were immediately collected. This admirable charity mitigated the horrors of the Irish famine. To augment the means of relief Parliament placed a further quarter of a million at the disposal of the Irish Government, to be employed on works of public utility. These measures saved the Irish from actual starvation. With the approach of autumn, and the new potato crop, the worst features of the famine were subdued; and the people, relieved from the fear of actual starvation, lapsed again into their normal condition of alternate ferocity and good humour, gaiety and despair.[1]

The disturbances in Ireland had a discouraging effect

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822., Hist., pp. 33–43; Chron., p. 98. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 337.

on the advocates of Roman Catholic emancipation in Parliament. In 1821 Plunket had succeeded in carrying his relief bill through the House of Commons. In 1822 he doubted the expediency of introducing any measure whatever on the subject. The session wore away without any step of the kind being taken. Though, however, no general measure of relief was proposed in 1822, an attempt was made during the year to remove one of the most patent grievances of the Roman Catholics. On the 30th of April, Canning introduced a bill to repeal so much of the Act of Charles II. as prevented Roman Catholic peers from sitting and voting in Parliament. The 30th of Charles II. was passed under exceptional circumstances and under peculiar excitement. The Legislature and the country were agitated with the story of a Popish plot; the king himself was suspected of something more than sympathy with the Roman Catholic religion; the heir to the throne was a member of the Roman Catholic Church; the perjured testimony of Oates was on everyone's lips; and the fears of another period of Roman Catholic ascendancy in everyone's heart. Under these circumstances Parliament proceeded to impeach Lord Stafford and to pass the Act of 1678. Seven years afterwards Parliament solemnly declared that 'the late Viscount Stafford was innocent of the treason laid to his charge, and that the testimony whereupon he was convicted was false.' The Legislature, in consequence, did their best to redress the wrong which they had unwittingly committed, and reversed the attainder on Lord Stafford. But they did not proceed to repeal the Act which the disclosures at Lord Stafford's trial had originally suggested; and recusant Peers were consequently debarred from access to the king's person, and from sitting and voting in Parliament.

Plunket's action paralysed by the disorders.

Canning's bill respecting Roman Catholic peers.

Lord Redesdale, who was one of the stoutest opponents of the Roman Catholic claims, but who was too shrewd

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to fall into the common error of defending an indefensible position, had the merit in 1791 of removing one of these disabilities. The Act of 1678 forbade access to the throne to Peers who could not conscientiously deny the 'ecclesiastical or spiritual' authority of any foreign potentate within this realm. The Act of 1791 enabled the Roman Catholic Peer, prepared to deny the temporal or civil jurisdiction of the Pope, to go into the presence of his sovereign. 'Was ever absurdity like this?' said Canning. 'The Catholic Peer may drive directly to St. James's and demand admission to the Royal presence. The cabalistic words, "temporal and civil," dissolve the interdiction of the Act of Charles II., and the closet doors fly open at the sound; but, if he turns his horses' heads from the Palace to the Parliament House, the charm loses its efficacy: no entrance there except through the words "ecclesiastical and spiritual," followed up with a sworn opinion on certain controverted points of religious faith and worship. But,' added Canning, rising into declamation of extraordinary eloquence, 'the strange anomalies in the situation of Catholic Peers are not yet exhausted. . . . Imagine the ministers of foreign potentates collecting for their respective courts the details' of the coronation. 'Who is it that overtops the Barons as they march?—the Catholic Lord Clifford. Who is it that does homage to the throne on behalf of the highest order of the Peerage?—the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. Whom has the king selected to return thanks to this assemblage of all that is most splendid and most worthy in the realm, in acknowledgment of their libation to his Majesty's health?—again the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. Did it occur to the representatives of Europe that the moment this ceremony was over, the Duke of Norfolk, highest in rank among the Peers, the Lord Clifford, and others, like him, representing a long line of illustrious

ancestry, were to be thrown by, like the lustres and banners that flamed and glittered in the scene, as useless and trumpery formalities?—that, with the pageantry of the hour, their importance faded away; and that he who headed the procession of Peers to-day could not sit among them as their equal on the morrow?'

The motion, thus eloquently recommended, was carried by 249 votes to 244.[1] Ten days afterwards the second reading of the bill was passed by 235 votes to 223.[2] On the 3rd of May the bill was read a third time—one of its opponents, unable to arrest its progress, thanking God 'that there were three estates of this realm—the King, Lords, and Commons.'[3] The staunch Tory was inaccurate in his statement, but his confidence was fully justified. The bill reached the House of Lords at the end of May. It was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 42.[4] The division was larger than that on which Plunket's measure had been rejected, the year before. The majority was greater than the majority of 1821.

The riot in Dublin in 1822.

The House of Lords had again refused to listen to the claims of the Roman Catholics. But the leading members of the Irish Government were bent on pursuing what the extreme Protestants of Dublin regarded as a Catholic policy. Lord Wellesley had acquired little popularity during his Lord Lieutenancy. He had offended the tradesmen of Dublin by his economies. He had offended the gentry of Ireland by carrying out a scheme, originally prepared by his predecessors, for the revision of the Irish magistracy. 'In seven counties alone no fewer than two hundred noblemen and gentlemen had writs of *supersedeas* directed to them.'[5] In these seven counties alone two hundred noblemen and gentlemen must necessarily have become the enemies of the Lord Lieutenant. A policy of this cha-

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 211–279.
[2] Ibid., pp. 475–518.
[3] Ibid., p. 673.
[4] 171 votes to 129.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. p. 1262.
[5] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist. p. 53. Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 361.

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racter disgusted the very persons on whom the Irish Government had hitherto placed their main reliance. The lower orders were, in the meanwhile, in a state of ferment. The Roman Catholics complained that Goulburn, the new Secretary to the Irish Government, was an Orangeman; the Protestants pointed to the support which Lord Wellesley was constantly extending to the Roman Catholics. The Irish had always associated particular days with riot and disorder; and the Dublin Protestants decided on a great demonstration on the 4th of November. It had been the custom on that day to decorate the equestrian statue which a previous generation had erected to the memory of William of Orange. The Orangemen, in 1822, decided that the custom should be observed with more than usual ceremony. The events of the time added a new significance to the demonstration. In ordinary years the decoration of the statue could only be regarded as a proof of Protestant ascendancy; in 1822 it could be accepted as a protest against the liberal leanings of the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Wellesley had no fancy for a demonstration which every Irish Roman Catholic regarded as an insult both to himself and his religion; and he had still less fancy for a proceeding avowedly intended as a protest against his own measures. He persuaded the Lord Mayor of Dublin to forbid the decoration of the statue. The order served as a match to kindle the smouldering embers of Orange discontent into a flame. Exasperated as the Irish Protestants had been before, they had never received such treatment from any previous Viceroy. The Corporation of Dublin, in their first fury, passed a vote of censure on their own mayor; the Irish merchants saw in the obscure occurrence a new reason for petitioning for the repeal of the Union. The determination of Lord Wellesley to treat Dublin as he would have treated Calcutta had kindled the Irish capital into a flame.

On the 14th of December, before the excitement

which these events occasioned had subsided, Lord Wellesley attended the theatre. The Orangemen seized the opportunity to mark their disapprobation of his proceedings. Placards with wretched doggerel upon them were circulated among the audience.[1] Lord Wellesley was hissed as he entered the theatre. The disturbance increased as the performance proceeded. A large quart bottle and a piece of a policeman's rattle were thrown into the Lord Lieutenant's box; and order was only restored by the interference of the police and the arrest of the rioters. Respectable people in Dublin and Ireland were shocked at this outrage. Had the prisoners been prosecuted for an aggravated riot 'not a scintilla of sympathy would have been raised in their favour from one end of Ireland to the other.'[2] Unfortunately, however, Lord Wellesley was surrounded with weak advisers. They flattered his vanity; they exaggerated his importance; and they persuaded him to regard the riot as an attack upon his life. Lord Wellesley, in consequence, became ridiculous among the very persons who would, under other circumstances, have been the first to support him. 'His Excellency has made a fine bustle of a playhouse row,' wrote Lord Redesdale.[3] Canning never lost an opportunity of quizzing 'the bottle plot;'[4] and Charles Wynn, writing to the Duke of Buckingham, described the Lord Lieutenant as 'the Devil of a Vice Roy.'[5] The prisoners who had taken part in the riot must have participated in Charles Wynn's feelings. They had apparently nothing to expect from the Irish Government. They were formally committed on the charge of conspiring to murder the Lord Lieutenant.[6] It was one

The riot in the playhouse.

[1] 'The Protestants want Talbot,
As the Papists have got all but,'
is a fair sample of the doggerel. (See Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 372.)

[2] So said Mr. Brownlow, who impugned the conduct of the Irish Government in the House of Commons. —*Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 969.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 264.

[4] Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. i. p. 427.

[5] 'Diabolus Domini Vice Regis.' Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. i. p. 407.

[6] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, p. 55; and Chron., p. 237.

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thing, however, to obtain the committal of the prisoners; it was another thing to secure their conviction by a Dublin jury. Plunket, as Attorney-General, declined to press the capital charge. He stated, indeed, that he had abundant evidence to support it, but that he relinquished it because the laws were never so powerful as when administered in mercy. Plunket's moderation was not, however, rewarded with success. After two days' deliberation the grand jury practically ignored all the bills against the accused persons. They acquitted all the five prisoners of a conspiracy to cause a riot; they found, in the case of only two of the prisoners, that a riot had been committed. Technically, however, two persons cannot commit a riot. The effect of the grand jury's finding, therefore, was to acquit all the prisoners of any offence known to the law. The great 'bottle plot' against the life of the Lord Lieutenant had been ignored by the grand jury of Dublin.

Plunket prosecutes the rioters.

The obscure riot in the Dublin theatre had already been honoured with too much notice. Plunket, however, declined to accept the decision of the grand jury. It was the custom in Dublin for each of the sheriffs to return the panel at alternate sessions. Sheriff Thorpe, on whom the turn had fallen on the occasion in question, was supposed to be a near relation to two of the accused persons. He had the imprudence to declare his intention of packing the jury; and Plunket had, in consequence, some excuse for declining to accept the judgment of a tribunal which had been expressly constituted to find against him. But Plunket's conduct, however capable of justification it might be, was imprudent The *ex officio* information which he decided on filing against the prisoners only gave the accused one more triumph. The court, on the morning of the new trial, was thronged to overflowing. The prisoners appeared confident of success. Fifteen counsel were retained for their defence. The jury was what was

called in Ireland 'a good jury.' There was no Roman Catholic upon it; there was no member of the Dublin Corporation upon it. Plunket, who was already known as the greatest advocate that Ireland had ever produced, surpassed all his previous achievements. His eloquence was so great, his case was so strong, that his friends relied on success, and the Orangemen gave way to despair. No Irishman need ever despair of an Irish jury. Old Lady Rossmore, who had survived to her ninetieth year, was brought forward to say that 'it must have been an older woman than herself to be frightened by the proceedings at the theatre.' A Dublin jury could not be expected to resist such testimony as this. At four o'clock on the fifth day of the trial the jury retired to consider their verdict. At nine o'clock they requested their discharge, as they were unable to agree. The judges locked them up to meditate during the night on the consequences of their differences. But the long night's reflection did not induce them to give in. At ten o'clock next morning they were fatigued with their night's fast, but they were still as far as ever from an agreement. At three o'clock in the afternoon Plunket consented to their discharge, as there was no prospect, even at that hour, of their arriving at a verdict.[1]

Abortive attack upon him in Parliament.

Plunket's conduct was naturally attacked in Parliament. His refusal to accept the decision of the grand jury was compared with the high-handed proceedings of Judge Jefferies, and declared to be without precedent in this country, and almost unprecedented in Ireland. The attack was led by Brownlow, the member for Armagh, who naturally reflected the opinions of a constituency which was distinguished for the extreme Protestantism of its views. But the attack, from its very nature, was never formidable. The greatest blow which could have

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., pp. 21–28. *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 997. Buckingham's *George IV.*, pp. 424–426.

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been given to the cause of the Roman Catholics would have been the recall of Lord Wellesley or the dismissal of Plunket. The Opposition could not join in driving from the Irish Government the only two men who were in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation. Plunket, therefore, had not much to fear from the Opposition benches of the House of Commons. The men who objected the most strongly to his policy were the extreme Tories, who sympathised with the Orangemen, and who thought that too many concessions had already been made to Irish Papists. Extreme Tories, however, who owed their seats in Parliament to the favour of the Administration, could not vote against the Attorney-General for Ireland.

Under these circumstances both sides of the House were virtually muzzled. The Opposition objected to *ex officio* informations, but they would have objected still more to driving Plunket from office. The Tories objected to Plunket's position in the Administration; but they could not afford to defeat the Government. Plunket, therefore, had no great difficulty in meeting the attack upon his conduct. In the course of his defence he justified himself by impugning the conduct of the sheriff who had returned the grand jury. Sheriff Thorpe became almost instantaneously a red herring dragged across the trail of the fox. The House, which had been slowly tracking the conduct of the Irish Attorney-General, galloped off in full cry after the Dublin Sheriff. Burdett at once gave notice that he should bring Sheriff Thorpe's conduct before the House. The sheriff was directed to attend; and day after day was occupied with a protracted investigation of his conduct. The long inquiry was not closed till the end of May. It was proved that Sheriff Thorpe was a violent Orangeman; but it was also shown that he had acted fairly in the particular case in which his conduct had been questioned

Turned into an attack upon the sheriff.

The House, after all its labours, wisely decided to let the matter drop, and to devote itself to other and more important business.[1]

The playhouse riot would, in all probability, have never obtained notoriety if Lord Wellesley had been a little less vain or a little more prudent. But the riot, and the proceedings which resulted from it, would never have occurred at all, if it had not been for the irritation which Lord Wellesley's system of government had produced among the Orangemen. Lord Wellesley had been sent to Ireland to conciliate the Roman Catholics. He had found on his arrival that such a policy was impracticable without occasioning deep offence to the Orange party. Orangeism, it must be recollected, was prevalent among the ruling classes and in Dublin Castle. Lord Manners, the Chancellor, was opposed to Roman Catholic emancipation. It was said that Goulburn, the Chief Secretary, had actually taken the Orange oath;[2] and the majority of the Lord Lieutenant's advisers were undoubtedly opposed to the policy of Lord Wellesley and Plunket. While Dublin was ringing with the news of Plunket's discomfiture an Orange dinner was given by the Beef Steak Club, in Dublin. It was attended by Lord Manners, the Irish Chancellor, and by three of the Lord Lieutenant's household. The Lord Lieutenant's health was drunk in dead silence; the silence was emphasised by the band playing the tune 'Now Phœbus Sinketh in the West.' Lord Talbot's health was then drunk with three times three; Peel's with nine times nine.

Lord Manners at the Beef Steak Club.

Lord Wellesley was naturally offended at this demonstration; and unfortunately he had not the dignity to conceal his mortification. Lord Manners' position was so exalted that the Lord Lieutenant dared not notice the

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 667, 964, 1149, and vol. ix., a large part of which volume is filled with the report of the inquiry.

[2] Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 333.

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Chancellor's presence at the dinner; but he showed his anger by dismissing the three members of his household who had been present at it. His resentment had little dignity; the news of it filled the Cabinet with apprehensions. It seemed impossible that both Lord Wellesley and Lord Manners could remain in Dublin; yet the recall of either of them would necessarily modify the whole aspect of the Administration. Every Irish Roman Catholic would regard the retirement of Lord Manners as a victory for his Church; every Orangeman would consider the resignation of Lord Wellesley as the triumph of the Dublin rioters. With some difficulty the trumpery quarrel was patched up. Lord Manners made 'a humble palinodia' to the Beef Steaks; Lord Wellesley's ruffled dignity was composed; and the Irish Government was suffered to retain its neutral aspect.[1]

Canning and Brougham.

The Ministry had encountered much embarrassment in their endeavours to conciliate the Roman Catholics. But they had not the courage to do more than pursue a neutral policy on the subject. The advocates of Roman Catholic emancipation were still in a minority in the Cabinet; and the time had not yet arrived when the complete concession of the claims of the Church of Rome could be made a Government question. The Cabinet, said Brougham on one occasion, 'resembled the chequered appearance of the keys of a harpsichord, alternately black and white, down the whole line: the members of the Government were kept exactly opposed to each other, and the balance was merely trimmed so as to accommodate here a vote in favour, there a vote against the Catholics.' The House laughed; and Canning in his reply dwelt on the impossibility of forming any Cabinet which should be unanimous on the Roman Catholic question. For the moment the subject dropped; but two days afterwards it was revived with a warmth which, at that time, was

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 274. Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, pp. 429, 443.

very unusual in Parliament. Various petitions had been presented for and against the Roman Catholic claims. Burdett had risen to express his disapprobation of the 'annual farce, carried on, year after year, for a great length of time, conducive to no good purpose;' and, after alluding to the speech which Canning had delivered forty-eight hours before, had declared that he declined to be a party to a deception upon the House and the country, and that he therefore intended to retire from the House when the Catholic question came on. Canning rose 'to contradict flatly and *in toto*, in the honourable baronet's presence, the words which the honourable baronet had imputed to him.'

The contradiction thus made infused still more heat into a debate which was already warm. At last, Brougham, forgetting the common courtesies of life, declared that Canning's conduct in accepting office in a divided Cabinet was 'the most incredible specimen of monstrous truckling, for the purpose of obtaining office, that the whole history of political tergiversation could furnish.' Canning, without waiting for Brougham to finish his sentence, rose to say 'that that is false.' A profound silence pervaded the House for some seconds, interrupted only by the Speaker expressing a hope that Canning would withdraw the expression that he had used. Canning declared that no consideration on earth should induce him to retract it. An uneasy discussion ensued, in the course of which Bankes proposed that both Canning and Brougham should be committed to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. There seemed, at one moment, a strong probability that the House would be compelled to commit both its leader and the most prominent member on the Opposition benches. Sir Robert Wilson had the dexterity to deliver it from this dilemma. He suggested that the words which had fallen from Brougham had reference to Canning's official character; and that

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Canning's interruption arose from the conviction that the imputation was intended to be personal. He thought that, if Canning would only avow that he had understood the words in a personal sense, and Brougham would declare that he had used them in reference to Canning's official capacity, both of them might be satisfied with these explanations. Canning and Brougham adopted Sir R. Wilson's suggestion; and an altercation, which seemed likely to lead to grave results, was allowed to drop.

A little boy of thirteen, earning a wretched livelihood in a London warehouse, was at that time gradually acquiring the knowledge of his fellow-men which was afterwards to enliven the most pathetic and most humorous stories of the century. A few years after the encounter between Canning and Brougham, Dickens entered the reporters' gallery of the House of Commons. Some member of it probably related to him the details of a scene which must have made a profound impression on all who had witnessed it. The incident was exactly suited to Dickens's sense of humour. He soon found an opportunity of turning it to account. Anyone who takes the trouble to compare the encounter between Brougham and Canning with the quarrel at the Pickwick Club, in the opening chapter of 'Pickwick,' will see that Dickens did little more than write a liberal paraphrase of the memorable scene in the House of Commons on the 17th of April, 1823. Peace had been restored in one case by the dexterous suggestion that the words had not been used in a personal sense; and passion was appeased in the other by the intimation that the words had been used 'in a Pickwickian sense.'

Rejection of Plunket's motion.

While the quarrel was still fresh, and Burdett's threat of secession was still unforgotten, Plunket rose to make his motion in favour of the Roman Catholics. As he rose the Radicals left the House in a body. Plunket had to speak from a losing brief to an inattentive au-

dience. His speech was short, and after the conclusion of it the House had no patience for continuing the debate. Its adjournment till the following day was negatived by a large majority. A proposal to adjourn it to the following week was met by a motion for the adjournment of the House, which was carried by 313 votes to 111. Outrages in Ireland and dissensions in Westminster had done their work. Nothing but the firmness of the Peers had prevented the emancipation of the Roman Catholics in 1821. The Roman Catholics could not command the votes of 150 members in the House of Commons in 1823. 'As to our Catholic question,' wrote Fremantle to the Duke of Buckingham the next day, 'it has gone to the devil.'[1]

The Catholic question as a whole had gone to the devil; but some of the friends of emancipation were sanguine enough to imagine that they could still deal with it in detail. In 1822 Canning had endeavoured to secure the apparently unobjectionable concession that Roman Catholic Peers should be allowed to sit in the House of Lords. In 1823 Lord Nugent desired to admit the Roman Catholics of Great Britain to the elective franchise. It was difficult to see what possible reason could be urged for conceding a vote to a Roman Catholic in Ireland and for refusing a vote to a Roman Catholic in Great Britain. The Roman Catholic in Great Britain was as peaceable as any other of his Majesty's subjects; while the Irish Roman Catholics had for twenty years been in a state of chronic rebellion. The Irish Roman Catholic had the elective franchise conceded to him by the Irish Act of 1798; the English Roman Catholic was still without a vote. The anomaly was so indefensible that Peel himself, the ablest opponent of the Roman Catholic claims, supported Lord Nugent's proposal. With Peel's assistance the bill easily progressed through

Lord Nugent in 1823.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. pp. 1070–1123.

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all its stages in the House of Commons. But neither the influence of Peel nor the rapid progress of the bill in the Lower House affected the decision of the Peers. Some of the ministers, indeed, in the House of Lords imitated the example of Peel and supported the measure. Lord Liverpool, Lord Westmoreland, and Lord Harrowby spoke in favour of it. Lord Eldon, however, made a strong speech against the bill. The heir-presumptive to the throne, the Duke of York, was 'conspicuously active' against it. Lord Sidmouth 'slunk away without voting.' The opponents of the bill were diligent in collecting proxies; its supporters were negligent in this respect; and the second reading was in consequence lost by 80 votes to 73.[1]

Fresh riots in Ireland.

Another session had passed, and no concession had been made to the Roman Catholics. The prospect of Roman Catholic emancipation was fading away; but the difficulties of the Irish Government were continually increasing. In the South of Ireland the Roman Catholic population was still committing the most indefensible outrages. In Dublin and in the North the Orangemen were indulging themselves in perpetual riot. Whenever Orangemen and Ribandmen met in any numbers a regular battle ensued. Firearms were constantly used, and lives were frequently lost at these encounters. In the meanwhile night after night daring outrages were perpetrated in Munster and Connaught. Houses were fired, cattle were houghed, arms were seized, and obnoxious persons were shot by men whom it was impracticable to detect, and whom it was therefore impossible to punish. The rioters moved in smaller bodies than in 1821 and 1822; but their proceedings were as daring and as formidable as they had proved in the preceding years. The Ministry were discouraged by the continuance of disorders which they were unable to

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. pp. 574, 1031, 1127, 1489.

suppress. The soldiers and police were wearied out in an attempt to track incendiaries and depredators who vanished, like will-o'-the-wisps, in the bogs and fastnesses into which they beguiled their baffled pursuers. Nothing, in Lord Wellesley's judgment, but a renewal of the Insurrection Act could enable the Irish Government to preserve tranquillity; and many members of the Opposition, ever ready to attend to Lord Wellesley's wishes, assented to his view.[1] Lord Wellesley, however, did not desire to rely on preventive measures alone. Personally he was anxious to remove the chief excuse for Roman Catholic disorder by conceding Roman Catholic emancipation. As this policy was impracticable he prevailed on the Government to deal with one of the chief grievances of which the poorer classes of the Irish complained.

Irish tithes.

Every Irishman would at once have stated that the tithe system constituted the chief of his minor grievances. The summary collection of an oppressive tax for the support of an alien Church would, under any circumstances, have produced resentment; but the conditions under which tithes were collected in Ireland were peculiarly irritating. The miserable cottier could not be expected to understand the justice of bestowing one-tenth of his little crop on an absentee incumbent, whose religious opinions he detested, while the rich Protestant farmer, who occupied some adjacent pasture, was exempt from tithe. The cottier, however, was by no means the only person who was entitled to complain of the tithe system. In the south and west of Ireland the rector himself was frequently unable to collect his tithes. His property, if he succeeded in collecting them, was the object of attack. 'During the latter part of September' 1822, wrote Lord Wellesley, 'few nights passed without the

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. ix. pp. 218–239, 1147–1203. *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., pp. 61, 62; and Chron., p. 50.* Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. i. p. 469.

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destruction by fire of some building, haggard, or stacks of tithe corn.' 'The incendiary was, of course, undiscoverable.' 'Undoubtedly throughout the whole country a general disposition prevails to invade the property of the clergy, to resist the payment of tithes, and to resort to every means of defeating all demands of the Church.'[1] A single instance will sufficiently illustrate the persistence of this disposition. In the summer of 1823 the rector of Castlehaven, in Cork, found it impossible to obtain his tithes. In consequence he procured a distress-warrant, and ordered his proctor, with the help of five special constables, to execute it. A force of six men, however, could not have ventured to enforce the warrant in that lawless district. Four mounted and seven dismounted constables, under the command of a lieutenant, were deputed to assist. The rector of Castlehaven had, in short, obtained the services of an armed force of eighteen men to collect his tithes. The little army achieved, in the first instance, some success. They seized a few cattle, and commenced driving them to the rector's premises. But the news of the affair spread rapidly among the neighbouring peasantry. The country-people assembled in great numbers round the unfortunate party and plied them with volleys of stones. The police fired on the people; the people stoned the police. The police were compelled to abandon the cattle which they had seized and to beat a retreat. Their retreat was not effected without loss. The proctor and one of the constables were killed, and others of the party were wounded. It was a poor consolation to the survivors that the peasantry had suffered equal losses. The spoils of victory had remained with the country-people. The distress-warrant had not been executed; the rector of Castlehaven had not obtained his tithes.[2]

The Tithe Bill.

No Government could have allowed the continuance

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., pp. 51,* 53.*

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., p. 85.

of such a system; and, in the course of 1822, Lord Liverpool's Administration endeavoured to apply a remedy to it. They carried a bill allowing the proprietors of tithes, with the consent, in the case of an incumbent, of the patron of the living and the bishop of the diocese, to let them on lease for twenty-one years to the owner of the land. The remedy, so far as it went, was a good one; but it was usually supposed to go a very little way indeed. Hume desired to enter into the whole question of the constitution of the Irish Church, and, in an elaborate speech, attacked the absentee incumbents living in salaried idleness away from their cures.[1] A large minority of the House of Commons, unprepared to adopt Hume's extreme views, were desirous of substituting some 'full and liberal equivalent for the present precarious and vexatious mode of supporting the Established Church,' and the Ministry was forced to the conclusion that they must do 'something more effectual' than their own bill had contemplated.[2] Accordingly, on the 6th of March, 1823, Goulburn introduced a bill to establish a composition for tithes. The bill empowered the Lord Lieutenant, on the application either of the incumbent of a parish or of a certain number of the tithe-paying inhabitants, to summon a special vestry of duly qualified persons for the purpose of making a composition for tithes. The incumbent was to appoint a commissioner; the inhabitants were to select another commissioner; the two commissioners, in the event of disagreement, were to nominate an umpire; and the commissioners or the umpire were to determine the amount of compensation to be paid to the incumbent instead of tithes. The sum so fixed was to be apportioned by special assessors among the various holdings in each parish which were not tithe-free. Land which was tithe-free was still to continue free of tithe.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vii. pp. 1147–1198.
[2] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 214.

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But it had been the custom in Ireland that agistment land, or land on which cattle were taken to be agisted or pastured, should be exempt from tithe. This exemption was now expressly repealed;[1] and, as Ireland was a pastoral country, its repeal naturally largely increased the area of tithe-paying land, and diminished to a corresponding extent the burden of the tithe on each holding.

During its progress through Parliament Goulburn's bill was subjected to one modification of importance. As the bill originally stood the commissioners appointed by the incumbent and the vestry could compel the incumbent to accept a composition against his will. In the course of the discussion some objection was made to this compulsory power, and the Ministry consequently found it necessary to give way. An attempt was subsequently made to restore the compulsory clause in the House of Lords; but the attempt failed; and the bill, in its ultimate shape, was, therefore, only a permissive measure. A permissive tithes composition bill constituted, however, a considerable reform. The advance was the greater because Lord Liverpool plainly hinted his readiness to go further should it prove necessary to do so. 'It was better, in the first instance,' he said, 'to leave the subject open to voluntary operation, because the Legislature had reserved to itself the power eventually, if it should be found expedient, of having recourse to a compulsory enactment.' But the tentative experiment undoubtedly succeeded. The extension of tithes to the agistment lands relieved the poorer classes of their chief grievance; and the minister had the satisfaction of ascertaining, in the recess, that there was every disposition among the tithe-owners to avail themselves of the permissive measure which Parliament had agreed to.[2]

[1] 4th Geo. IV., c. 99, s. xxxv. For a definition of 'agistment' land see Kerr's *Blackstone*, vol. ii. p. 462.

[2] The debates on the Tithes Bill will be found in *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 494–501; and vol. ix. pp. 366–376, 602–609, 802–810, 1434, 1452, 1489. See also *Ann. Reg.*, 1823,

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The success of the bill was, in fact, very marked. It had no sooner passed than the Irish Government forwarded a copy of it, with a brief abstract of its provisions, to every parish in Ireland. Before the middle of the following February 1,033 applications—507 from the clergy, 526 from lay impropriators—had been made from different parishes for special vestries to carry into effect the proposed arrangements. In 240 cases a basis of agreement had already been found, the parties having themselves arranged the terms of the composition. Almost every class of persons in Ireland had displayed a praiseworthy readiness to subscribe to the principle of the measure. The clergy had been moderate in their demands; the vestries had been careful in their proceedings; and the holders of grass lands alone had shown a not unnatural reluctance to subject their lands, which had hitherto been tithe-free, to the payment of tithes. Many proprietors of grass land, however, had taken a more liberal view, and had exerted themselves to have the Act put in operation, from a sense of the benefits it would confer on Ireland.[1] The Tithe Act had, then, on the whole, been attended with a gratifying success; and, though Ireland was still the scene of outrage and disturbance, symptoms of improvement and of returning confidence were already visible.[2] The other measures of the Government also proved beneficial. The revision of the magistracy and the improvement of the constabulary had done much good, and quiet was being gradually restored to the distracted country.[3]

Its success.

There was, however, a new feature in Irish politics which was far from reassuring. Outrages were being gradually repressed by the exertions of the authorities.

Hist., pp. 63–65; and, for success of bill, Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 13, 89.

[1] Goulburn's speech in House of Commons (*Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. p. 851).

[2] Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. p. 71.

[3] Ibid., p. 89; and Colchester, vol. iii. p. 312.

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Men were no longer murdered, cattle were no longer houghed, women were no longer carried off, stacks were no longer burned, amidst the approving shouts of a sympathising population; but the differences between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants were as great as ever. All Ireland was arrayed in two factions. The Protestant minority were enrolled in Orange Associations; the Roman Catholics had lately availed themselves of a much more formidable union. The Orange Associations had their origin in the disorders which disgraced the north of Ireland in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. Bands of Protestants, under the name of Peep-o'-day Boys, had scoured the country and seized the arms which the Roman Catholics possessed in defiance of the law. Compelled by these outrages to organise themselves in their own defence, the Roman Catholics had formed themselves into bands of Defenders; and Defenders and Peep-o'-day Boys had fought a pitched battle in the neighbourhood of Armagh, in which the Defenders had been decisively defeated. The victors in the battle, retaining the organisation which had given them their superiority, formed themselves into societies, pledged by a secret oath to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne, and to maintain the Protestant ascendancy. These associations naturally irritated the Roman Catholic party; but they attracted comparatively slight attention till the latter end of 1822. Lord Wellesley's appointment drove the Orangemen to extreme measures, and the riots which occurred in Dublin at the close of that year were mainly attributable to the dislike which Irish Protestants felt for a Lord Lieutenant with Roman Catholic sympathies. Lord Wellesley's attention was thus forcibly directed to the proceedings of the Orange societies; and, at the commencement of 1823, he urged the Government to take steps for their suppression.

Associations.

The Cabinet was still considering Lord Wellesley's proposal, when their attention was forcibly directed to

the subject by a motion in the House of Commons. James Abercromby was a younger son of the distinguished officer who lost his life in Egypt in 1801. His family had been ennobled after his father's victory and death; and James Abercromby's elder brother sat in the House of Lords as Lord Abercromby. James Abercromby owed his seat in Parliament to the patronage of Lord Lansdowne. He shared on every subject the liberal opinions of his patron. Some experience in Parliamentary life, and considerable diligence in attending to his duties, made him an authority in debate. The extreme honesty of his character ensured for him general respect. Abercromby agreed with the majority of the Opposition in regretting the existence of the formidable societies which were distracting Ireland. He agreed with them in desiring to strengthen the hands of the Lord Lieutenant. But he was also anxious to regulate the Orange lodges. His motion was successful. Goulburn, the Chief Secretary, who was suspected of being an Orangeman, vigorously defended the action of the lodges, but announced the intention of the Government to introduce some measure for the suppression of secret societies.[1] The announcement satisfied the House. Abercromby's motion was withdrawn; and an Act to prevent the administering of unlawful oaths in Ireland was passed before the close of the session.

The Act, however, did not prove successful. The Orangemen proved too strong for the law; and the Orange lodges, instead of being suppressed, became more active and more numerous than ever.[2] The Roman Catholics, alarmed at the organisation of the Protestants, imitated their example, and 'wherever an Orange society was introduced a Ribbon society was immediately formed.'[3] Men in high office accepted posts of honour

[1] 4th Geo. IV., c. 77. *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 443.
[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. pp. 446, 662. [3] Ibid., p. 446.

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in the Orange lodges; and the priests of the Roman Church enrolled themselves among the Ribbonmen. The whole of Ireland, from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, was thus organised in two camps; and either party was ready at any moment to exasperate the other.

The Catholic Association.

It seemed impossible to devise a more formidable or a more serious system. But Ireland was on the eve of witnessing a much more dangerous organisation. In the course of 1823 a small body of Roman Catholic gentlemen met together in Dublin, ostensibly to prepare a petition to Parliament for obtaining Catholic emancipation. They were not deputed or authorised by anyone to represent them; they were not, in the first instance, joined either by the Roman Catholic aristocracy or by the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church. The principal men among them, however, were lawyers of reputation; and, as they engaged at their periodical meetings in regular debates, which were prominently reported in the Irish newspapers, their proceedings gradually attracted attention, and their conduct was regarded with increasing favour. The attitude of the Orangemen, and a few heated speeches in Parliament, afforded them a pretext, or, as the Association put it, imposed on them 'a just and imperious necessity, for calling the attention of the people to the perilous situation in which their lives, property, and liberty were placed, at the mercy of a lawless, bigoted, unrelenting faction, having no other religion among themselves but a professed hatred of all Catholics.' The Association thus succeeded in becoming a rallying centre for all true Roman Catholics; and, as such a condition naturally occasioned some expense, they organised the entire country, appointing secretaries in every parish, charged with the duty of collecting a Catholic rent from the Roman Catholic population. The higher classes among the Roman Catholics, gradually awakening to its importance, joined the Association. The members of it

regularly met in Dublin, mimicked the forms of Parliament, and debated every subject of interest to Ireland. As they avoided any sort of election, the best lawyers were doubtful whether the Association came within an Act which had passed in 1793 to suppress the Association of United Irishmen.[1] A self-constituted legislature, practically exercising the power of taxation, and continually attracting greater attention, sat regularly in Dublin; and the Government was either powerless, or thought itself unable, to stop its proceedings.[2]

O'Connell.

An association of this character was naturally dependent, to a great extent, on the persons by whom its business was guided. The Catholic Association had the advantage of a remarkable man for its founder. Daniel O'Connell was born in 1775. He was educated partly in France; and he returned from France disgusted with the excesses of the Revolution, and almost a Tory in heart. He joined the Irish Bar, and gradually acquired the reputation of an eloquent and successful advocate. A great speech, delivered in Dublin in 1800 against the Union, increased his fame. He took part in politics, and his religion naturally induced him to desire the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. He became a leader—the chief among the leaders—of the Catholics. He was, in various ways, admirably qualified for such a position. He was sprung from a good family; he had inherited a considerable fortune; and he was possessed of great natural eloquence. From an Irish point of view it was probably no disadvantage to him that he had unfortunately shot an antagonist in a duel. The sincere regret

[1] The Convention Act of 1793 forbad all assemblies 'constituted and appointed to represent, or assuming, or exercising a right or authority to represent, the people of the realm.' The law officers' opinion (both English and Irish) on the possible application of the Act to the Catholic Association will be found in Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 247, 255. See also Froude's *English in Ireland*, and Sir H. Parnell, in *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 220.

[2] See, for this association, *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 941; and xii. pp. 168, 214. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 273, 290, 330, 362.

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which he himself felt at this event was, in another way, of service to him. It accounted for and justified the determination which he was known to have formed, never to fight a man again.

O'Connell was the life and soul of the Catholic Association. He suggested its formation; he managed its business; he was the chief orator at its meetings, the chief adviser at its counsels. But the association began its operations in a very humble fashion. Its first meeting was only attended by some three persons; and it only gradually secured the adhesion of the more prominent Roman Catholics. Its progress, however, created undisguised alarm among the Irish Protestants. Brownlow, the member for Armagh, presented a petition to Parliament for its suppression. Brownlow was an unfortunate person for such a purpose. He was a member of the Orange Society, prepared to maintain that the principles of that society were just, praiseworthy, and constitutional. Plunket, who replied to Brownlow, censured him severely for entering 'an unlawful association,' the object 'of which was to overstep the pale of the laws, and to overawe and control the Government,' and implied that he was ready to enforce the law both against Catholics and Protestants.[1] Brownlow's motion led to no definite result. But the Government, charged with the duty of preserving peace amidst the discordant elements around it, thought it necessary to apply for a renewal of the special machinery for doing so with which it had previously been entrusted. Parliament was accordingly asked to renew the Irish Insurrection Act, and, after some discussion, consented to do so. The Opposition was only able to muster small minorities against the measure.[2]

Though, however, the Irish Insurrection Act was re-

[1] For the debate, see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 943.

[2] It was read a second time on the 14th of June, by 112 votes to 23. *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 1337. The third reading was afterwards carried by 52 votes to 14. Ibid., p. 1467.

newed, the Legislature displayed an unexpected anxiety to probe the cause of the disease which was rendering such a measure inevitable. At a comparatively early period of the session Lord Darnley, an Irish earl, moved for a select committee to inquire how far the provisions lately adopted by Parliament had tended to remove the grievances, to allay the discontent, or to secure the welfare and happiness of Ireland; and to ascertain what further measures of regulation or conciliation may be required to remedy the evils that had long existed in that country. Lord Liverpool objected to a general inquiry of this nature, and Lord Darnley's motion was rejected by fifty-seven votes to seventeen.[1] About a month after its rejection, however, a similar proposal was made in the House of Commons by a young nobleman who was gradually acquiring the confidence of the Whig party. Lord Althorp was the eldest son of the second Earl Spencer. His father had begun life as a Whig, had passed over to the Tories on the outbreak of the French Revolution; had become Privy Seal and First Lord of the Admiralty under Pitt; had resigned with his great leader in 1801; and had again accepted office as Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Talents Administration. His eldest son, Lord Althorp, was born in 1782, and educated at Harrow and Cambridge, where he showed considerable ability. During his first two years at the University he gained great distinction. During the third year of his residence a love of the turf allured him from his books, and heavy gambling saddled him with debt. He had the rare courage, however, to withdraw himself from pursuits which would probably have proved fatal both to his father's fortune and his own career; and, after a short tour on the Continent, he entered Parliament in 1804. No young man of ability and position ever seemed less likely to place his mark on the history of his age. A

Motions on Ireland in Parliament.

Lord Althorp.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 281.

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passionate love of sport kept him constantly from the House; an extreme shyness prevented him from speaking; ungainly manners made him singularly unattractive in society. It appeared improbable that he would ever achieve higher distinction than could be won by a generous patron of the prize ring and an admirable master of foxhounds.

Some years after Lord Althorp's entrance into Parliament he was almost insensibly drawn by a series of peculiar events into the vortex of political warfare. In 1809 Colonel Wardle attacked the Duke of York. The charges against the duke were exactly those which a straightforward country gentleman, mixing little with society, and hating all dishonesty, was likely to examine. Lord Althorp formed a strong opinion against the duke; and his feelings on the subject were so warm that he was actually induced himself to propose his Royal Highness's removal from the command of the army. The ice was broken by Lord Althorp's speech. But his speech did more than break the ice. It introduced him to a small knot of extreme Liberals, who, without much respect for the ordinary leaders of their party, advocated what were then considered extreme measures, and insisted on the necessity of retrenchment and reform. His new associates soon urged Lord Althorp forward. His marriage with a wealthy heiress improved his position. Her premature death increased his desire for work. Identifying himself more and more closely with the Reformers, Lord Althorp was gradually induced to take an increasingly active part against the measures of Lord Liverpool's Administration; and 'honest Jack Althorp,' as he was called, gradually losing his shyness with practice, was always ready to raise his voice against any measure of oppression, or to lend his advocacy to any liberal proposal.[1]

[1] See Sir Denis le Marchant's interesting *Life of Lord Althorp*.

Ireland was one of the subjects on which Lord Althorp felt strongly. During his short tour abroad he had noticed with indignation the evident traces of Roman Catholic oppression. The wrongs of Protestants in Italy directed his singularly just mind to the wrongs of the Roman Catholics in Ireland. He became, in consequence, an eager supporter of Roman Catholic emancipation. In 1824, however, the most hopeful politicians were beginning to despair of effecting the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. The terrible disturbances of 1821 and 1822 had reconciled the best friends of the Irish to the policy of repression; and, in 1824, the House of Lords had refused even to inquire into the causes which had made repressive measures necessary. About a month after its refusal Lord Althorp made a motion, in the House of Commons, for a similar inquiry. The Government, instead of refusing an inquiry, put up Goulburn to limit it to 'the nature and extent of the disturbances that have prevailed in those districts of Ireland which are now subject to the operation of the Insurrection Act.' Many politicians thought that there was very little difference between Althorp's motion and Goulburn's amendment. The Cabinet seem to have put up Goulburn in order that they might themselves retain the nomination of the committee in their own hands. If they were influenced by this reason they did not avail themselves of their position. The committee was mainly composed of members who desired the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Goulburn's amendment was, however, carried by only a small majority: many of the usual supporters of the Ministry stayed away; and the limited inquiry was only preferred to the larger investigation by 184 votes to 136.[1] The appointment of Goulburn's committee in the House

Committee appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland.

[1] For the debate and division see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. pp. 654–723. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 69–75.

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of Commons induced Lord Liverpool to propose a similar inquiry in the House of Lords. Lord Lansdowne, following Lord Althorp's example, desired to extend the inquiry to the whole of Ireland. Lord Lansdowne's amendment was, however, rejected by a large majority, and the committee suggested by Lord Liverpool was appointed.[1]

The Roman Catholic question had now reached a new phase. The prospect of emancipation seemed as distant as ever; but the Cabinet had conceded the necessity of inquiring into the state of Ireland. During the same month in which this concession was made Lord Lansdowne endeavoured to obtain some slight justice for the Roman Catholics of England. In the previous year Lord Nugent had endeavoured to secure the English Roman Catholics the elective franchise. The bill had passed the Commons, but had been defeated in the Lords. Lord Lansdowne decided on reviving it, and on simultaneously introducing two other bills to allow the English Roman Catholics to hold Revenue offices, and to become justices of the peace; and to enable the Duke of Norfolk to execute the office of Earl Marshal. Five Cabinet Ministers, Lords Liverpool, Harrowby, Westmorland, Bathurst, and Bexley, supported Lord Lansdowne. But the House either distrusted the sincerity of the Prime Minister or rejected his counsels. Both Lord Lansdowne's bills were rejected by large majorities, the House thus refusing to place the English Roman Catholic on the footing on which the Irish Roman Catholic had long stood. Any immediate prospect of relief faded away at the announcement of these decisive majorities.[2]

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 753.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. p. 842. The majorities were 139 to 101, and 143 to 109. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 327. A bill to enable the Duke of Norfolk to sit as Earl Marshal was subsequently almost smuggled through the House of Lords. See *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xi. pp. 1455, 1470, and the protest against it, ibid., p. 1482. George IV. was very much annoyed at the success of this bill. Eldon, vol. ii. p. 522.

The determination of the Tories, however, to refuse the smallest concession to the Roman Catholics irritated the Liberals to attack the Established Church. In 1823, and again in 1824, Hume moved for an inquiry into the existing Church Establishment of Ireland. He was able to show that a considerable proportion of the beneficed clergy were non-resident; that many of them were pluralists; and that the incomes of the clergy were out of all proportion to the work which they had to perform. Late in the session of 1824 the Bishop of Limerick succeeded in successfully disposing of a few of Hume's charges. He proved that some of the pluralists whom Hume attacked were really different clergymen bearing the same name. But the Bishop of Limerick's speech did not get rid of the main charge; and, in private, the strongest Tories admitted that 'many of the unions' of Irish parishes had 'been abominable jobs,' which were hardly justifiable on the plea that 'everything is always job in Ireland.'[1]

The rejection of emancipation leads to an attack on the Irish Church.

The jobs did not only consist in heaping pluralities on well-connected clergymen. The Church rate in Ireland was necessarily mainly levied on Roman Catholics; but the rate was constantly applied to the most illegal and indefensible purposes. Clerks were paid higher salaries than the law entitled them to receive. Houses were built for them at the expense of the parish; and the Protestants were actually, in some cases, provided with prayer-books at the cost of the ratepayers.[2] Disgraceful practices of this character disgusted the best friends of the Church; but even the knowledge of such practices could not reconcile them to an inquiry into the Church Establishment. Hume only secured sixty-two supporters in 1823 and seventy-nine in 1824;[3] 153 members voted against him on the last of these occasions. The majority was

[1] Lord Redesdale, in Colchester, vol. iii. p. 323.

[2] For the facts see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. p. 619.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 418; and vol. xi. p. 588.

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large enough to reassure any timid member of the House of Commons. But, large as it was, a minority of seventy-nine on such a subject excited some apprehensions. Hume, wrote a contemporary chronicler, 'found more supporters' than his 'motion ought to have met with in a British House of Commons.'[1]

Increased activity of the Catholic Association.

Both Tories and Liberals had, then, reason for dissatisfaction with the results of the session of 1824. Before the session had closed the increasing boldness of the Catholic Association in Dublin was occasioning disquietude to the Ministry. The Association was no longer composed of a few clever lawyers in Dublin. The first men in Ireland were openly joining it. Its rent was regularly levied in every parish. Its addresses were openly read in every chapel. The Association took upon itself the most important duties. When a Roman Catholic was killed by a Protestant in a parish brawl it appointed a counsel to conduct the prosecution. It issued an address calling upon the Irish to abstain from all illegal societies, 'in the name of common sense, by the hate you bear the Orangemen, by the confidence you repose in the Catholic Association.' Its organisation was so complete, the language of its leaders was so bold, that well-informed politicians contemplated the probability of an immediate civil war; and Lord Wellesley was violently abused for his negligence to suppress an association which was apparently threatening the disruption of the empire.[2] In the midst of this agitation, one Pastorius or Pastorini took upon himself to declare that the heretics were to be extirpated in 1825. Pastorini founded his prediction on some obscure passages in the Apocalypse. Its idle folly was denounced by the Roman Catholic Primate; but the prophecy was widely circulated and universally believed. The Roman Catholics looked forward

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1824, Hist., p. 33.
[2] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 178. *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 179.

to their victory. The Protestants declared that they were apprehensive of their massacre.[1] It seemed not impossible that the credence which Pastorini's prophecy obtained would produce the revolt which might accomplish the fulfilment of the prediction.

Alarming condition of Ireland.

The Ministry was naturally alarmed at the threatening symptoms which were visible throughout Ireland. In the midst of their alarm the language of O'Connell increased in boldness. Bolivar was a favourite hero among Liberals in every country. It was with Bolivar's assistance that the South American colonies had acquired their virtual independence. Bolivar was still at the head of an armed force struggling against Spain; and the British Government had virtually decided to recognise the States which owed their origin and existence to his efforts. On the 16th of December, O'Connell, speaking at the Catholic Association, had the temerity to use words to the effect, 'If Parliament will not attend to the Roman Catholic claims, I hope that some Bolivar will arise to vindicate their rights.'[2] The great agitator had thrown down a challenge to the Government which it was impossible to ignore.[3] They had been anxiously awaiting some opportunity for testing the legality of the Catholic Association, and O'Connell's language had furnished them with a pretext for the prosecution they desired. The king, indeed, doubted the possibility of a prosecution at that particular juncture. To his infinite annoyance, the Ministry had, at last, decided on recognising the South American colonies; and his Majesty thought it inconsistent to recognise Bolivar's work in one hemisphere and at the same time prosecute O'Connell for holding him up

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 312. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 386.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 354. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 384.

[3] Some years before O'Connell had used the words—

'Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?'

—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 359. Pearce's *Wellesley*, vol. iii. p. 332. This quotation afforded an unfortunate commentary on the reference to Bolivar.

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as an example in the other.[1] The king's doubts were to a certain extent shared by the Duke of Wellington, but they were overruled by the great majority of the Cabinet. O'Connell's prosecution was not, however, attended with any satisfactory results. Some doubt arose as to the exact words which the agitator had used. The grand jury, which probably required an excuse for doing so, threw out the bill. O'Connell had the satisfaction of achieving a victory over the Government.

Bill for suppressing the Catholic Association,

The Ministry had failed; but their failure only increased the universal apprehension at the power of the Catholic Association. Roman Catholic priests, hardly less ignorant and superstitious than their flocks, used the most reprehensible language in their pulpits, and all Ireland firmly believed in the approach of civil warfare. The Protestants declared that nothing could be done until the Association was suppressed; and the Ministry at last decided to take measures for its suppression. When Parliament met on the 3rd of February, 1825, the speech from the throne expressed 'the gratification of his Majesty that Ireland' was 'participating in the prosperity' which prevailed elsewhere; and that 'the outrages, for the suppression of which extraordinary powers' had been confided to him, had ceased. The speech, however, went on to express his Majesty's 'regret that associations should exist in Ireland which have adopted proceedings irreconcileable with the spirit of the constitution, and calculated, by exciting alarm and exasperating animosities, to endanger the peace of society, and to retard the course of national improvement.' His Majesty added that he relied on the wisdom of Parliament 'to consider without delay the means of applying a remedy to the evil.'

This passage in the speech, of course, attracted a good deal of attention. Brougham especially was particularly severe on the introduction of the word 'associations' in

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 377, 384, 394.

the plural. 'That little letter S,' said he, 'is one of the slyest introductions that Belial ever resorted to in any of those speeches which are calculated to

> Make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels: for his thoughts are low.

I am perfectly aware, Sir, by whom that S was added. I know the reflection which passed through the mind of the writer: "I must put the word in the plural. It will then be considered as applicable to Orange as to Catholic Associations, and the adversaries of both will be conciliated." Let not that little S, however, deceive a single person. However it may be pretended to hold the balance even between the Catholic and the Orange Associations, depend upon it it will only be a nominal equality. The Catholic Association will be strongly put down with one hand, while the Orange Association will only receive a gentle tap with the other.' Sir John Newport, an Irish member of ability, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland during the Talents Administration, endorsed Brougham's view. 'It was quite clear, he thought, that against the Catholic Association this measure was directed, and against it alone.'[1] These utterances, on the part of the Opposition, foreboded the kind of attack which the measure itself would receive. When Goulburn gave notice of his intention to introduce the bill, Brougham proposed a call of the House, 'in order to show whether or not the cry of no Popery which had been raised was really countenanced by the constituents of honourable members.'[2]

Goulburn introduced the bill on the 10th of February. The Government hoped to obtain leave for its introduction after two nights' discussion. At the end of the second evening Brougham moved the adjournment of the debate;

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. pp. 65, 102. [2] Ibid., p. 124.

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and, as he declared that he was resolved to go on dividing, the debate was again adjourned till Monday, the 14th of February. Early on the following Wednesday morning leave was, at last, given to introduce the bill, and the protracted discussion terminated for the time.[1] On the Friday evening, however, it was again revived on a motion of Brougham's that the Roman Catholic Association be heard by counsel. 'Sir,' said Brougham, 'the bill before the House pronounces the condemnation of the Catholic Association. It puts that body to death. But, before it is thus doomed to destruction, it has a right to be heard in its own exculpation and defence.' The plausible argument, however, fell on unwilling ears. The House had made up its mind to pass Goulburn's bill, and had no intention of adopting a motion which would inevitably delay its passage through Parliament. Brougham's proposal was rejected by a large majority.[2]

which becomes law,

Both sides of the House had some reason to be satisfied with these debates. The Ministry had, so far, carried their point. But their progress had been so slow that their ultimate success seemed still distant. 'At the rate of four debates per stage,' wrote Lord Grenville, 'it seems rather doubtful how soon, or rather how late, this bill may come up to the House of Lords.'[3] The determined character of the opposition justified such an opinion. Yet the future progress of the bill was immensely facilitated by the discussions which had already taken place. The subject was exhausted; the division lists had shown the Ministry their strength, and the Opposition their weakness. The second reading was carried on the 21st of February, after an unusually short debate, by a large majority.[4] A proposal of Hume's to exact from every office-holder in Ireland an oath, that 'he does not now

[1] The motion was carried by 278 votes to 123.—Ibid., p. 521.

[2] By 222 votes to 89.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 591.

[3] Buckingham's *George IV.*, p. 212.

[4] 253 votes to 107.—*Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 611.

belong and will not hereafter belong to any association declared to be illegal,' was rejected, on the 22nd of February, without a division;[1] and finally, on the 25th of February, the bill was read a third time and passed.[2] Its progress through the House of Lords was equally rapid. A motion that the Association should be heard by counsel was rejected on the 3rd of March. On the same evening the bill was read a second time; and, on the 7th of March, it was read a third time and passed.[3] Notwithstanding the vigorous opposition with which it had been originally assailed, the bill had become law within a month of its first introduction.

A month of valuable time had been sacrificed, and the bill had become law. It had hardly, however, become law when it was discovered to be an utter failure. The Act was to continue in force for three years; and during the whole period for which it was in force it remained a dead letter. The Act made every society illegal which was constituted for the redress of grievances either 'in Church or State, renewing its meetings for more than fourteen days, or collecting or receiving money.' The Catholic Association did not attempt to resist the law, they simply evaded it. The old Association was allowed to expire. A new Association was formed, 'which professed not to discuss the question of Catholic emancipation, but to be formed for the purposes of education and other charitable purposes.' The new Association convened once a week a separate meeting. The separate meeting was assumed to have no connection with the Association, and to terminate on the day on which it met. The Roman Catholic leaders had, moreover, the dexterity to avail themselves of the section of the Act which permitted fourteen days meetings. They held fourteen days meetings, and had the assurance to say

and fails.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 635. [2] Ibid., p. 710.
[3] Ibid., pp. 872, 899, 950. The majorities were very large.

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that they were convened pursuant to Act of Parliament. Nor was the collection of the rent suspended. Churchwardens were appointed in every parish for the purpose of collecting it; and, in order that its collection might be presumed to be made for charitable purposes, many of the contributors paid it in for the relief of the forty shilling freeholders. O'Connell himself paid his quota 'for all purposes allowable by law.' The section of the Act which was directed against Orange processions proved equally useless. The Act made it illegal for the members of an illegal society to walk in procession, but it was judicially held that the law could not be enforced unless it was first proved that the individuals walked in the procession as an illegal society. Under these circumstances one part of the Act proved as useless as the other; and no attempt whatever was made to enforce its provisions.[1]

The Act, in short, failed; but it had one consequence which its originators had hardly anticipated. It increased the irritation of the Roman Catholics both in Great Britain and Ireland. It increased the desire of those politicians who sympathised with them to remedy their grievances. For nearly four years no serious effort had been made to carry the question of Catholic emancipation. The outrages committed by Roman Catholic peasants in Ireland, the quarrels of their friends in England, had effectually prevented anything being done. On the first day of March, 1825, while the Association Bill was before the Lords, Burdett, against his own judgment, but at the instance of Lord Lansdowne and Brougham, again brought forward the Roman Catholic question. Canning, who was suffering from gout, supported the motion, though he was too ill to stay for the division; and, in a full House, Burdett had a majority of 13.[2] The Roman

The Roman Catholic question revived.

[1] See *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., p. 44; and Sir R. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 25, 26, 27, 31, 41, 46.

[2] Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 217. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 371. *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 840. The numbers were 247 to 234.

Catholics had not gained so important a success for four years. On the 23rd of March Burdett brought in a bill to give effect to his victory. The bill was at once read a first time, and the second reading was postponed till after the Easter holidays.[1]

When the House met after the holidays, on the 19th of April, the earlier part of the evening was consumed in presenting and discussing the petitions both for and against the bill. The debate on the second reading, thus delayed, was protracted through the evening, and was afterwards adjourned till the 21st of April. It was opened on the first evening by Brownlow, the member for Armagh, who had hitherto stoutly resisted every concession to the Roman Catholics, but who had the courage to avow his determination to support Burdett's bill. Brownlow's avowal produced a considerable effect on the House. The firmest opponents of the measure began to question the possibility of resistance when the Protestant member for Armagh was prepared to yield. The effect was increased when, later on in the debate, two other Irish members, both representing constituencies in Ulster,[2] expressed their concurrence in Brownlow's views, and their determination to reconsider their previous conclusions and support Burdett. Opinion was evidently swinging slowly round and gradually pointing to a settlement of the Roman Catholic question. The probability of its settlement was indicated by the action of independent members. So long as no real prospect had existed of any relief being afforded, the House had been contented to confine itself to the abstract question of relief. As soon, however, as it became plain that concession was imminent the feeling became general that concession should be accompanied by conditions. The majority of the House was in favour of emancipation,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 1143.

[2] Mr. J. W. Maxwell, member for Downpatrick, and Col. Forde, member for Downshire.

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but they were also in favour of accompanying a measure of relief with some restriction on the elective franchise, and some provision for the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Before the Catholic Relief Bill was read a second time notice was given of an Elective Franchise Bill and of a Clergy Support Bill. These bills, it was supposed, would reconcile many waverers to Burdett's measure and help the latter on its way through Parliament. They became, in consequence, known as its 'wings.' With their aid the Relief Bill was read a second time, in an unusually full House, by a slightly larger majority than had been expected.[1]

The wings

The two men who took charge of the wings were both destined to make a slight mark on the history of their age. Littleton, the member for Staffordshire, who introduced the Elective Franchise Bill, was a rich Staffordshire landlord, the owner of Teddesley, 'an ugly house in an ugly situation;' a hospitable host, with good shooting and a bad cook.[2] Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, who introduced the Clergy Support Bill, was a younger son of Lord Stafford, a young man of considerable promise and of unusual tact. Littleton and Leveson-Gower both subsequently held the office of Irish Secretary. Both of them were raised to the Peerage. Lord Francis Leveson-Gower became well known as Earl of Ellesmere. Littleton, after breaking up an Administration by his want of tact, was made Lord Hatherton. Leveson-Gower, in his 'wing,' proposed to set aside 250,000*l.* a year for the State endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy. Littleton, in his 'wing,' proposed to disfranchise the 40*s.* freeholders in Ireland and to confine the franchise to persons having 10*l.* a year in land. A 40*s.* freeholder in Ireland was a much less substantial person than a 40*s.* freeholder in

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 123. The division was 268 votes to 241; but there were also 22 pairs. Cf. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 240.

[2] Mr. Greville is responsible for these views—vol. i. p. 11.

England. In Ireland a cottier, holding a freehold for life of the nominal value of 40*s.* annually, was allowed a vote. The freeholder, in short, was little better than a leaseholder, and 40*s.* freeholders were lavishly made by Irish landlords for political purposes. These freeholders had hitherto been entirely dependent on the landlord who created them. The landlord usually allowed them to have half a year's rent in their hands. The slightest indication of independence on their part was met by a summons for back rent. The landlord reserved to himself the right of cutting turf. An independent tenant was, at once, debarred from exercising it. Nothing, then, could be more wretched or more dependent than the position of the 40*s.* freeholder. The House of Commons, impressed with this circumstance, read Littleton's bill a second time by 233 votes to 185. It subsequently adopted Lord F. Leveson-Gower's proposal by 205 votes to 162. A tacit understanding was arrived at that the future progress of the wings should depend on the treatment which the Relief Bill received from the House of Lords.[1]

The Relief Bill passes the Commons.

In the meanwhile the Relief Bill itself made rapid progress through the House of Commons. It passed through committee on the 6th of May, and it was read a third time and passed by a majority of 248 votes to 227 on the 10th of May.[2] Both sides expected the final settlement of the question. The Whigs, on their part, doubted whether the Lords could again resist the express wish of the Commons; the Tories conjectured that they were opposing the Roman Catholics 'for the last time.'[3] Peel himself, who had led the opposition to Burdett, and who still objected on principle to all concession, actually

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. pp. 177, 182, 247, 336.

[2] Ibid., pp. 449, 558.

[3] The famous words of Peel. Lord Dalling, who admits that they will bear the natural construction placed on them in the text, argues that they may be taken as an indication of the speaker's own hesitation on the subject. This view seems, however, utterly irreconcileable with Peel's character and his own account of his conduct.—Lord Dalling's *Peel*, p. 37.

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tendered his resignation to Lord Liverpool, and contemplated an immediate retirement from the Government.[1] He only withdrew it because he was assured that his own resignation would be followed by that of the Prime Minister. For a short time the Ministry was on the eve of breaking up.[2] The danger, however, was far less imminent than the Tories had imagined. Two days after the Relief Bill had been read a second time in the House of Commons, the Duke of York, in the House of Lords, presented a petition against the bill from the Dean and Chapter of Windsor. In presenting the petition the duke thought proper to make the most remarkable speech ever delivered by any member of the English royal family. After strongly arguing against the measure he concluded by saying that 'he felt the subject most forcibly, and that it affected him yet more deeply, when he remembered that to its agitation must be ascribed that severe illness which had clouded the existence of his illustrious and beloved father. He should, therefore, conclude with assuring their lordships that he had uttered his honest and conscientious sentiments, founded upon principles which he had imbibed from his earliest youth; to the justice of which he had subscribed, after serious consideration, when he attained more mature years; and that these were the principles to which he would adhere, and which he would maintain and act up to, to the latest moment of his existence, whatever might be his situation of life. So help him God!'[3]

This celebrated declaration of the duke's created a prodigious sensation. Sturdy Protestants had it printed in letters of gold and hung up in their houses or placarded on the walls of the metropolis. Practical Protestants contented themselves with a more concise expression of

[1] See Peel's own statement, *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 731.
[2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 103. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 483.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 142.

their sentiments; and manifested their approval of his Royal Highness's speech by the emphatic inscription, 'Damn the King. The Duke of York for ever.'[1] Calmer minds doubted, however, the propriety of language which was both inappropriate and indecent. It was obviously indecent in the duke to assume the probability of his surviving his elder brother. It was obviously inappropriate to announce his determination, in the event of his survival, to resist the will of his people Those who desired Roman Catholic emancipation saw, in the duke's declaration, fresh reason for haste, lest his Royal Highness's accession to the throne should render success impossible. Wynn, though a member of the Government, openly avowed in the House of Commons his anxiety for dispatch. Brougham, with much dexterity, treated the report of the speech as a libel of the reporter. 'James the Second had never said anything one millionth part so scandalous as that which was attributed to the Duke of York in this libel. He trusted that an example would be made of the printer here, and the circulator in Ireland, of this atrocious paper.'[2] The atrocious paper had, however, done its work. The Peers rallied to the duke's support. The second reading of the Relief Bill was rejected by 178 votes to 130 or by a majority of 48. 'God be thanked,' was the pious reflection which the king wrote to Lord Liverpool the next day.[3] Twenty-four rejoicing Protestants celebrated the victory, a few days afterwards, at a sumptuous dinner given by the Duke of York, and 'drank the forty-eight, the year 1688, and the glorious and immortal memory of William the Third.'[4]

and is rejected by the Lords.

The enthusiasm created by the victory was so great that Wellington desired to dissolve Parliament at once. A dissolution was, under any circumstances, inevitable in

The general election of 1826.

[1] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 542. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 241.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. pp. 172, 878.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xiii. p. 766. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 451.
[4] Eldon, vol. ii. p. 554.

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1826, and the duke naturally wished to dissolve at a moment when the opinion prevailing throughout the country was directly adverse to the claims of the Roman Catholics. Liverpool, however, to whom he made the suggestion, shrank from adopting the duke's advice. The dissolution was postponed, and the Parliament of 1820 was eventually permitted to die of extreme old age in 1826. During the session of 1826, however, no further progress was made towards a settlement of the Catholic question. The Roman Catholics, disheartened by their recent defeat in the House of Lords, abstained from urging their friends to bring forward their case in the existing Parliament; and both parties awaited the result of a general election before making any further movement. The general election of 1826, in some respects, justified the anticipations which Wellington had formed. In England intolerant Protestants raised a cry of 'No Popery,' and so popular a candidate as Lord John Russell suffered a defeat in consequence. But in Ireland the election produced a very different result. O'Connell decided on affording the British Government a new proof of the power of the Catholic Association. The county voter in Ireland had hitherto been miserably dependent on his landlord. Created for political purposes, he had marched to the poll in his landlord's train, and voted with undeviating fidelity as his landlord bade him. O'Connell determined to prove that a greater influence than that of the landlord had arisen in Ireland, and he selected for the purpose a county in which the landlords' influence had always been unquestioned. Waterford could almost be described as the property of the Beresfords, and Lord George Beresford, who had represented the county for some years, was in all respects an unexceptionable candidate. O'Connell took exception to him, and, at O'Connell's bidding, the 40*s.* freeholders rose in tumultuous revolt against their landlords. Lord Waterford's own

tenantry marched forth against him; and Lord George Beresford, hopeless of success, had to retire from the contest.[1]

The Duke of York's last effort for the Protestants.

The events of the Waterford election naturally excited considerable consternation in England. The Duke of York's famous speech of the preceding year had made him the champion of the Protestant cause. But the Duke of York's declaration had lost half its force from the duke's declining health. Seriously, if not dangerously, ill, the duke's accession to the throne was becoming more and more improbable. From his sick bed at Weybridge, however, he made one last effort for the Protestants, and urged Lord Liverpool to take a decisive course and bring the question at once to an issue. The duke's advice evidently pointed to the formation of an exclusively Protestant Administration; but it was easy to show the king that such advice was at once impracticable, and also opposed to the principle on which the Ministry had been constituted.[2] While the duke was making one last effort against the Catholics, O'Connell was publicly declaring in Dublin that it was a mockery to say that the people of Ireland had not an interest in his Royal Highness ceasing to live. 'If the Royal Duke shall not become converted from his political errors I am perfectly resigned to the will of God, and shall abide the result with the most Christian resignation.'[3] O'Connell's indecent language did perhaps more harm to his cause than the indiscreet advocacy of the dying duke. English Protestants found one more reason for refusing to listen to an agitator who could stoop to attack an enemy on his deathbed.

Roman Catholic emancipation had thus, for many years, been occupying the thoughts of politicians. During the whole of Lord Liverpool's Administration it had

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 172.

[2] For this intrigue see Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 432; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 462.

[3] *Annual Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 126.

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divided the Cabinet, it had distracted the House of Commons, and it had agitated the country. Parliamentary Reform had been advocated by many of the statesmen who had been conspicuous for their enlightened support of the claims of the Roman Catholics. But Parliamentary Reform had hitherto made a slower progress than the emancipation question. All the rising young men were in favour of removing religious disabilities; but the rising generation was by no means equally desirous of a reform of Parliament. Canning was the most eloquent advocate of religious equality; but Canning was the uncompromising opponent of every measure of Parliamentary reform. Rotten boroughs, close corporations, corrupt constituencies were defended by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament; and Parliamentary reform could hardly be reckoned in the category of practical politics. Yet the abuses which disgraced the representative system had been recognised for fifty years; and some of the foremost statesmen of the eighteenth century had endeavoured to remove them. No result, however, ensued from their labours, and the House of Commons remained unreformed.

Parliamentary reform.

Representative abuses.

The abuses of the representative system have already been described in a previous chapter of this work. In England and Ireland the county member represented the landed interest alone. The largest tenant-farmers, the largest manufacturers, and the largest householders had no vote. In Scotland the county member did not even represent the landed interest. He was elected by the few thousand persons who happened to enjoy the feudal superiorities of the land. The English and Irish borough member usually represented some wealthy individual; the Scotch borough member commonly represented a close corporation. Considerably more than one-half of all the members of the House of Commons owed their seats to the direct interference of about two hundred and fifty

fortunate individuals. Seats were bought and sold like tickets for the Opera, and bribery was almost openly practised in the few constituencies where the people had any share in the elections. Corruption extended from the constituencies to the House, and members of Parliament sold their votes to the Ministry of the day almost as openly as they purchased the support of their constituents.

These abuses attracted attention, and produced an attack upon the representative system, which was held responsible for them. Lord Chatham, in 1766, declared that the borough representation was 'the rotten part of our Constitution.' 'It cannot continue a century; if it does not drop it must be amputated.' He suggested, in 1770, that a third member should be added to every county, 'to counterbalance the weight of corrupt and venal boroughs.'[1] Nothing came of the great Lord Chatham's proposal. The Whigs declined to support a project which was encouraged by popular agitation, and Reform was left for other statesmen to deal with. A man was soon found with courage to attempt the task. Wilkes's political career is memorable for the long struggle which he maintained with the Crown and with Parliament; and Wilkes, suffering from the persecution of the House of Commons, was naturally led to investigate the subject of Reform. In 1776 he asked leave to introduce a bill for disfranchising the rotten boroughs, for enfranchising rich populous trading towns, and for giving additional members to Middlesex, Yorkshire, and other large counties.[2] Wilkes failed, as Lord Chatham had failed before him. A radical Reform Bill, introduced by the Duke of Richmond in 1780, met with a similar fate, and the reform of Parliament seemed almost indefinitely postponed.

Lord Chatham as a Reformer.

Wilkes.

The session of 1780, however, in which the Duke of Richmond's motion was defeated, was memorable for the

[1] May's *Const. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 327.

[2] Ibid., p. 328.

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correction of some of the worst abuses of the Parliamentary system. It was in this session that Dunning carried his memorable motion against the influence of the Crown. It was in this session that Burke proposed his scheme of economical reform. It was in this session that a bill excluding contractors from Parliament was first adopted by the House of Commons. It was in this session that the first determined effort was made to disqualify Revenue officers from voting. Two years afterwards the Rockingham Administration came into power, and two of the proposals which had been rejected in 1780 were adopted. Contractors were excluded from the House, and revenue officers were disqualified from voting.[1] In the same year

Pitt.

the second William Pitt resumed the subject of Reform at the point at which his father had left it. On the 7th of May, 1782, he moved the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of the representation. The motion was rejected by 161 votes to 141.[2] Fifty years afterwards, on the same day of the same month, a still more decisive majority apparently determined the fate of the great Reform Bill. The Peers decided by 151 votes to 116 that the question of enfranchisement should precede that of disfranchisement, and Lord Grey's Administration resigned. But the popular excitement, which the decision of the Peers created in 1832, compelled the Ministry to resume the reins of office, and carried the bill through all its remaining stages. No similar excitement was occasioned by the rejection of Reform in 1782; but, exactly one year afterwards, Pitt renewed his efforts. On the 7th of May, 1783, he proposed three resolutions, affirming the necessity of preventing bribery and expense at elections; declaring the expediency of disfranchising any boroughs which from time to time might be proved to be corrupt; and proposing that an addition should be made to the number of county and metropolitan mem-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1782, Hist., p. 180. [2] Ibid., 1782, Hist., p. 181.

bers. The House passed to the order of the day by 293 votes to 149. The growing strength of the non-Reformers excited no surprise. In 1782 Pitt had spoken with the authority which attached to him as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1783 he was only a prominent member of the Opposition. When he next brought forward the question of Reform he spoke with the authority of Prime Minister. The Reform Bill which he then proposed contemplated the disfranchisement of thirty-six boroughs, and the transfer of their members to the counties and the unrepresented towns. The novel feature of the measure, however, was the provision of a fund of 1,000,000*l.* to be paid as compensation to the borough-owners. Pitt proposed that the 1,000,000*l.* should be at once set aside at compound interest, and allowed to accumulate till it became an irresistible bait to the borough owners. His proposal, however, was not successful. Fox condemned the offer of a bribe; Pitt's usual supporters looked coldly on the measure; the public out of doors displayed only a languid interest in it; and the bill was rejected by 248 votes to 174. Disappointed at his defeat, Pitt never again brought forward the question of Reform.[1]

The circumstances of the country, during the earlier years of Pitt's Ministry, were not favourable to the Reformers. The king had become popular; his excessive influence had been checked; the Press had acquired its freedom; the people were in enjoyment of their liberties; the industrious classes were largely benefited by an auspicious peace; and the wise financial measures of the minister promoted and augmented the general prosperity. An almost universal satisfaction checked any desire for change. With one solitary exception the cause of Reform lay dormant and forgotten for seven years. But the calm which lay on the bosom of Europe was only temporary. The quiet was unduly ruffled by the Revolution in France; and the

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1783, Hist., p. 176; and 1784–5, pp. 189*, 190*.

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wild projects of the Republicans spread with unexpected rapidity over Europe. Parliamentary Reform was again demanded in Britain; and the demand was made with a fiercer voice than that with which it had been previously advocated. The Friends of the People drew up an admirable and unanswerable petition to the House of Commons.

Grey.

A young man, Charles Grey—whose name was to be heard of afterwards in connection with the question—was selected to bring the subject before Parliament; and the great orator of the Whig party—notwithstanding his policy in 1785—was prepared to support the motion. But the hurricane which was raging in France interfered with quiet consideration or calm debate. Pitt himself, contemplating repressive legislation, modified the generous opinions which he had inherited from Lord Chatham, and ranged himself with the non-Reformers. The violence of Paine and Godwin and other writers was used with crushing effect as an argument against all change; and Grey's motion was rejected by 232 votes to 41.[1] Four years afterwards Grey again attempted to obtain a hearing for the Reformers. But the country was at war; the passions of the Tory party were excited against everything that was revolutionary; 'the panic dread of change' prevailed which influenced Parliament for thirty years. Grey's proposal was rejected by an overwhelming majority; and the question of Reform was not raised again in a serious shape for another twenty years.

Modern progress increased the demand for reform,

While, however, statesmen were fondly imagining that they were stereotyping the old abuses which they persisted in regarding as indispensable, the stern logic of facts was fighting irresistibly against them. Great as were the anomalies which Chatham had detected in the representative system, the inequalities were becoming annually greater. The old rotten boroughs still continued to crumble to decay. No one ever contemplated build-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1793, pp. 151–165.

ing a cottage in Old Sarum or Gatton; no one thought of repairing the venerable ruin on the coast of Dorsetshire, or of reclaiming a single acre of submerged Dunwich. But a new England, breathing a new life, and hopelessly opposed to old traditions, was rising in other places. Hargreaves and Arkwright, Crompton and Cartwright, Watt and Boulton, Telford and Brindley had unconsciously been doing the work of the Reformers. Manchester had grown from a tiny village to a mighty town; Birmingham was speaking with the voice of a hundred thousand people. Leeds and Sheffield had each fifty thousand inhabitants; Leith, Paisley, and Stockport had twenty thousand each. London, ever extending its limits, had spread far beyond its ancient boundaries; and Marylebone, Finsbury, the Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, and Greenwich were thriving suburbs teeming with humanity. None of these places had any representation. The busy town of Devonport had no member, but the neighbouring villages of Plympton and Saltash had two members each. The fashionable watering-place, Brighton, had no member; but the neighbouring hamlet of Seaford had two members. The short-sighted statesmen of the day thought that these anomalies were productive of the happiest consequences. Nothing in their view was so convenient as a nomination borough; nothing was so inconvenient as a contested election in a large constituency. 'The grant of representation to the large boroughs,' wrote the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, in 1821, 'would be the greatest evil conferred on those towns: it would subject the population to a perpetual factious canvass, which would divert more or less the people from their industrious habits and keep alive a permanent spirit of turbulence and disaffection among them. . . . I do not wish to see more such boroughs as Westminster, Southwark, Nottingham, &c. I believe them to be more corrupt than any other places when seriously contested; and I believe the description

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of persons who find their way into Parliament through those places are generally those whom, from the peculiarity of their character and station, are the least likely to be steadily attached to the good order of society.'[1] It is well to test uncompromising declarations of this character with the facts of the time at which they were written. At the general election of 1820 Sir Robert Wilson, an illustrious officer, had been elected for Southwark; Denman, the most exemplary of lawyers, had been elected for Nottingham; while, three years previously, the virtuous Romilly had been placed at the head of the poll at Westminster. The absence of Romilly's well-known figure, the presence of Denman, ought to have induced Lord Liverpool to have reconsidered his hasty and inaccurate conclusion. His unjust remark recalls the reproof which Macaulay applied to one of his successors: 'The first Minister of the Crown declared that he would consent to no reform; that he thought our representative system, just as it stood, the masterpiece of human wisdom; that, if he had to make it anew, he would make it just as it was, with all its represented ruins, and all its unrepresented cities.'[2]

Lord Liverpool might declaim against the corruption of the large boroughs; but it would have required a greater man than Liverpool to have checked the growing passion for Reform. The anomalies, of which the Reformers complained, were so great that their redress was ultimately certain; and it so happened that an emphasis had been given to their arguments by another innovation. The commencement of the nineteenth century saw the first of the decennial censuses which, since 1801, have

[1] Yonge's *Liverpool*, vol. iii. pp. 137, 138.

[2] Speech of July 5, 1831. Macaulay's works, vol. viii. p. 33. The magnificent passage, which is not reported in *Hansard*, is an almost solitary instance of the use by Macaulay of an inappropriate word. The *cities* were mostly represented; the large *towns* were mostly unrepresented.

been regularly taken. Each census emphasised with fresh and ever-increasing force the striking disparity between the populations of the unrepresented towns and the represented villages. Each census enabled the Reformers to appeal to figures, published on unimpeachable authority, in support of their arguments. Figures alone, indeed, would not have ensured their success. But the events which followed the war created an appetite for change. Never had England passed through a severer crisis than that of 1816. Industry was paralysed, labour was without employment. In many cases the landlord had no rent, the manufacturer no profit, the capitalist no interest, the labourer no wages. 'The stars in their courses fought against' the Tories, and a wet and inclement season increased the universal gloom. Discontent was everywhere visible, and discontent gave an opportunity to political agitators which they were not likely to lose. The great meetings in the Spa Fields were held, and the Ministry affected to believe in a project of universal insurrection. It was inevitable as well as desirable that the demand for Reform which was being raised out of doors should find some sympathy in the House of Commons; and, for the first time for twenty years, Parliament, in 1817, found itself face to face with a real popular demand for Reform. Night after night, at the commencement of the session, petitions for Reform were presented to the House of Commons. Lord Sefton was charged with one from Liverpool signed by 14,000 persons; Lord Cochrane brought up petitions from Bristol and Manchester with 15,000 and 30,000 signatures respectively. Sir F. Burdett on one evening submitted 527 petitions. Most of these petitions demanded a radical alteration in the constitution of the House of Commons. Many of them were couched in very intemperate and improper language. Many of them were in print, and, therefore, irregular. Hours of valuable time were occupied in deciding the

which is strengthened by distress.

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admissibility of some of them. The great Manchester petition was rejected. It was found that 468 out of Sir F. Burdett's 527 petitions were in print, and they were therefore rejected. These rejections weeded the petitions which had been presented to the House,[1] but they did not efface the impression which their presentation was intended to make. The petitions pointed, quite as plainly as the demonstrations in the Spa Fields and elsewhere, to the profound discontent which universally prevailed. A period of unprecedented distress and dissatisfaction had suddenly given new emphasis to the demands of the Reformers.

Continued opposition to Reform in Parliament

The same reasons, however, which had resuscitated the demand for Reform determined the majority of the House of Commons to resist the applications of the Reformers. Politicians who had refused to listen to the advice of Pitt were not likely to be intimidated into submission by Hunt and Watson. The chief champions of the Reformers in the House of Commons, moreover, were hardly more popular than the mob orators out of doors. No one doubted the gallantry of Lord Cochrane or the ability of Sir Francis Burdett; but Cochrane and Burdett were the very last persons who were likely to influence an unreformed House of Commons. Cochrane avowed that he had had no scruples in practising the corrupt devices which he so loudly reprobated. He had been convicted of transactions on the Stock Exchange of the most reprehensible description. His political friends, indeed, believed in his innocence of the charges for which he had been condemned; but the mass of his contemporaries had not yet formed the favourable view of his conduct which the leniency of a later generation has adopted. Burdett's political career was chiefly remarkable for his sensational contest with the Speaker in 1810. But his language had not become more temperate with his riper years. He

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. pp. 234, 238, 860, 1002.

had the folly in 1817 to denounce the assembly he was addressing as a House 'falsely denominating itself the Commons House of Parliament.'[1] A proposal introduced by Burdett and supported by Cochrane was not likely, therefore, to conciliate the House of Commons. A motion which Burdett made in 1817 for the appointment of a select committee on the state of the representation was rejected by 265 votes to 77.[2] Its rejection was inevitable. The debate was chiefly remarkable for the declaration, which it elicited from one of the most rising members of the Whig party, that he 'would as soon part with Yorkshire as with Old Sarum.'[3] When such sentiments were openly expressed by liberal men the task of the Reformers seemed hopeless. Burdett, however, was discouraged neither by the language of his friends nor by the summary rejection of his motion. Late in the session of 1818 he again brought forward the subject, and moved a series of twenty-six resolutions. The resolutions were perhaps the longest which were ever submitted to the House of Commons; they proposed the adoption of universal suffrage, electoral districts, and vote by ballot. They met with one of the most remarkable receptions which was ever given to any proposal in Parliament. Not a single member voted with Burdett, and 106 members voted against him. The injudicious proceedings of an intemperate politician had covered a great question with ridicule.[4]

encouraged by Burdett's unpopularity.

In the summer of 1818 Parliament was dissolved. The general election in the autumn of the year aided, to some extent, the views of the Reformers. Lord Liverpool's Ministry was, on the whole, unsuccessful in the constituencies; but it still commanded a considerable majority in the new House of Commons. The keenness

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxv. p. 317.
[2] Ibid., vol. xxxvi. p. 812.
[3] See J. W. Ward's speech, ibid., p. 767.
[4] *Hansard*, vol. xxxviii. p. 1185.

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of the contest between the great rival parties had not, however, been favourable to purity of election, and the small boroughs in the west of England had notoriously been disgraced by the most open bribery. Gross bribery was found to have been committed at Penryn; the corruption at Barnstaple was so general that the Grenville committee thought it incumbent on them 'to submit the same to the most serious consideration of the House;' the patron at Ilchester had taken the extreme course of ejecting 163 poor persons who had offended him by their conduct at the election; practices 'the most corrupt' were proved to have taken place at Camelford; 'and at Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford the sitting members were accordingly all unseated.'[1] A strong minority in the House desired to disfranchise corrupt boroughs of this character and to transfer their members to some of the great towns, such as Manchester or Leeds, which had no representation. It so happened that a trial of an unusual nature, which occurred about the same time, assisted their contention. One of the members unseated at Barnstaple, who had been declared guilty 'of bribery and treating,' was Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes, a baronet of Jewish extraction and considerable wealth. Sir Manasseh had expended 3,000*l.* on the election: he had bribed sixty-six out of the three hundred resident electors with five pounds each; and he had paid the outvoters, whose support he had received, twenty pounds each.[2] Nothing could be clearer than the corrupt condition of Barnstaple, or the misconduct of Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes. The House of Commons, however, although they had unseated Sir Manasseh, were not inclined to do much more than laugh at his conduct. It was proposed that the boundaries of the borough should be enlarged; that a few additional voters should be thrown into it in this way; and that the electors should

Corruption in 1818.

Sir M. Lopes.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 711, 933, 1353, 1448.
[2] Ibid., p. 1390.

be left to resist as best they could the machinations of the next 'Lothario'[1] who came to tempt them.

Unluckily for Sir Manasseh Lopes, his conduct was brought before a less good-humoured tribunal than a Grenville committee. The Grenville committee on the Barnstaple election had reported on the 9th of March, 1819. On the 18th of March Sir Manasseh was indicted at Exeter, before Mr. Justice Holroyd and a special jury, for bribery at a previous election at Grampound. In November 1815 Sir Manasseh had held an interview with one Hoare, a voter of Grampound, and had arranged with him to be returned for the borough for 2,000*l.* The money was nominally to be advanced as a loan, but it was in reality to be distributed among the sixty freemen who were voters for the borough. In 1817 Mr. Teed, also a candidate for the borough, obtained information of these proceedings, and taxed Sir Manasseh with his bribery. Sir Manasseh offered to surrender his interest in the seat to Teed. He told him that he was advised that the lapse of two years from the payment of the money had relieved the electors from any liability for their conduct, and he abandoned his right to the seat to another candidate. Bribery, however, naturally succeeded. Teed was defeated, and brought an action against Sir Manasseh. Mr. Justice Holroyd told the jury that, if they believed the witnesses, the case had been clearly made out. The jury returned a verdict of guilty without leaving the jury-box; and Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes was sentenced to pay a fine of 10,000*l.* and suffer two-years' imprisonment.[2]

The conviction of Sir Manasseh Masseh Lopes for bribery marked the commencement of a new period in the history of Reform. The imprisonment of a member

[1] The name was applied to Sir Manasseh by Sir R. Wilson.—*Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 460.

[2] The trial will be found in the *Ann. Reg.*, Chron., 1819, p. 210.

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of the House of Commons for proceedings not one jot worse than those which a hundred other members had notoriously committed was a stern fact which was well calculated to make a profound impression. Burdett, indeed, again appeared as the champion of the Reformers; but the position which he adopted in 1819 was wholly different from that which he had assumed in 1818. A change of front was, indeed, inevitable. Lord Cochrane, Sir Francis's sole supporter in the previous year, was fighting the Spaniards on the coast of South America. Sir Francis, in 1819, only asked the House to take the state of the representation into its consideration early in the following session. The motion was defeated by 153 votes to 58; but it was remarkable for one short speech.

Lord John Russell takes up the subject of Reform.

Lord John Russell was the third son of the sixth Duke of Bedford. Born in 1792, and educated at Westminster, he had been returned for his father's borough of Tavistock when he had not attained the age at which it was competent for him to sit in Parliament. Sprung from a family which for generations had been distinguished for the liberality of its opinions, his entrance into Parliament was welcomed by the Whigs; but his diminutive stature and his weakly frame would have made most people doubt his future eminence. With extraordinary capacity for debate, he had neither the presence of Peel nor the eloquence of Canning; and he was not regarded, therefore, on either side of the House as a very formidable champion. In the course of the debate on Burdett's motion, in 1819, he stated, in a few sentences, the propriety of disfranchising the small boroughs which were notoriously corrupt, and of reducing the duration of Parliaments; but he denounced as 'wild and visionary' the schemes which Burdett had propounded.[1] Burdett attempted to reply to Lord J. Russell's attack. He begged the young lord who attacked him to point out the defects in his own

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1496.

principles and reasoning, and to undertake the task of reform himself.[1] He had, probably, no expectation that his invitation would be immediately accepted, and that the cause of the Reformers was on the eve of being transferred from his own injudicious guidance to the temperate young statesman who had just explained in a dozen sentences his views on the subject.

His earliest efforts.

Lord John Russell was not long without taking action on the subject. Four days after the rejection of Burdett's motion he prevailed on the House to resolve that 'such a notorious system of corruption has prevailed in the borough of Grampound as to call for the serious consideration of this House;' and to pledge itself 'to take the same into consideration at an early period in the next session of Parliament.'[2] The next session was not, however, favourable for motions of this character. Parliament was hastily summoned before Christmas to agree to 'the measures of severe coercion' which Castlereagh had the hardihood to propose. Parliament was hurriedly assembled after Christmas to be formally acquainted with the king's death and its own immediate dissolution. Short, however, as the period was which elapsed between the death of George III. and the dissolution of the Parliament of 1818, Lord John Russell endeavoured to carry in it an important measure of reform. He asked the House to refuse the issue of writs to the four notoriously corrupt boroughs of Western England, Grampound, Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford. The House of Commons agreed to the bill which he introduced for the purpose, though even in the House of Commons grave objections were raised to a proceeding which had no precedent in Parliamentary history. The criticisms passed on the measure in the Lower House of Parliament encouraged the Peers to reject it altogether. The bill was declared to be both unnecessary and unjust—unnecessary, because the ap-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1502.

[2] Ibid., vol. xl. p. 1516.

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proaching election would throw no impediment in the way of any punishment which Parliament might hereafter think it expedient to inflict on these corrupt boroughs; unjust, because it pronounced condemnation without evidence and without hearing the accused in their defence.[1] Fortified by these arguments, the Peers rejected Lord John Russell's measure: Grampound was allowed, for one time more, to return members to Parliament.

Bill for disfranchising Grampound.

Lord John Russell, however, was not discouraged by his failure. The first Parliament of the reign of George IV. met on the 21st of April, 1820. On the 28th of April Lord John gave notice of a motion for the disfranchisement of Grampound and the transfer of the right of election to the borough of Leeds. On the 9th of May the bill which he introduced for the purpose was read a first time. To one part of the proposition which was thus submitted to it every section of the House of Commons was agreed. Corruption had been so general in Grampound that no one had a word to say in favour of the borough. Tories and Whigs were equally decided on its disfranchisement. But the widest differences arose as to the use which should be made of the seats which would thus be vacated. Castlereagh, desirous of minimising the change to be made, wished to extend the boundaries of the borough to the adjacent hundred. Precedent was in favour of the minister's suggestion. When Shoreham was disfranchised in 1771 the right of election had been transferred to the freeholders of the neighbouring rape of Bramber. A similar policy had been subsequently applied to Cricklade and to Aylesbury. Resting on these precedents, the Ministry desired to extend the right of voting in Grampound to the freeholders of the hundreds of Powder and Pyder. The minister's proposal was at once resisted by Lord John

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 23, 24. *Hansard*, vol. xli. pp. 1637–1642.

Russell, The rotten boroughs, in his judgment, were like the dry bones in the prophet's vision: the dry bones could only be clothed with fresh vitality by transferring the representation to the populous places which were continually acquiring fresh importance.

Lord John Russell was thus opposed to suggestions such as those which Castlereagh had favoured, and which received all the support of Canning's eloquence. But there was another party in the House of Commons which was equally opposed to the project of Lord John Russell and the counter-suggestion of Lord Castlereagh. Such men as Charles Wynn disliked the notion of instituting a rather larger edition of Grampound; but they disliked still more the idea of creating new boroughs like Leeds. The preamble of Lord John's bill increased their objections to it. It declared that 'Whereas the borough of Leeds, in the county of York, has of late years become a place of great trade, population, and wealth, it is expedient that it should have two burgesses to serve in Parliament.' Such a statement, solemnly embodied in an Act of Parliament, would evidently lead to larger consequences than the disfranchisement of Grampound and the enfranchisement of Leeds. Manchester was a larger and more important town than Leeds; and it was obvious that the principle which was being applied to Leeds must ultimately be extended to Manchester. Birmingham was a more important town than Leeds. Sheffield was almost equal to Leeds in importance. If, in short, it were once admitted that it was expedient to give members to towns which had of late years become places of great trade and population, there was no saying where Parliament would be able to draw a line, or where the progress of Reform would be checked.

There was, moreover, another feature in the proposed enfranchisement of Leeds which naturally alarmed the politicians of 1820. Lord John Russell desired to confer

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the franchise at Leeds on every five pound householder. A five pound franchise, Canning calculated, would admit 8,000 of the inhabitants of Leeds to the suffrage. Liverpool, with a larger population, had only 4,000 electors; and the grant of a popular franchise at Leeds would inevitably lead to an irresistible demand for a popular franchise elsewhere. This consideration strengthened Charles Wynn's objection to the enfranchisement of Leeds. It suggested the alternative which he himself proposed for the transfer of the two members for Grampound to the great county of Yorkshire. But these differences of opinion as to the use which should be made of the two seats did not affect the progress of Lord John Russell's measure. The second reading was agreed to without a division on the 19th of May. A motion for going into committee upon it was made on the 5th of June. Almost at the very hour at which Lord John Russell's motion was made the queen was setting out from St. Omer and driving to Calais. Ministers, at last persuaded of the reality of the queen's return, were hurrying from the House to deliberate on their policy; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pleading the absence of the Cabinet as an excuse, persuaded Lord John to consent to the adjournment of the debate for a week. The week passed; but it was obviously hopeless after its expiration to resume the consideration of the Grampound bill. Castlereagh declared that if Lord John Russell should bring on the discussion he would himself retire from it. The threat, however, was unnecessary. The alleged misconduct of a queen was a much more interesting subject than the proved misconduct of a few score Cornishmen; and Grampound won another year of grace from the circumstance of her Majesty's return to England.[1]

Very early in the following year the queen's business

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. i. pp. 39, 237–241, 480–520, 864–867, 1039.

was, at length, concluded. Parliament, relieved from the melancholy duty which had been imposed upon it, was once more at liberty to attend to its immediate business. Lord John Russell availed himself of the opportunity to reintroduce his bill. But the criticisms which had been applied to it in the previous session induced him to make one important amendment in it. In 1820 he had proposed to confer the franchise on all five-pound householders. In 1821 he decided to restrict the franchise to ten-pound householders. The bill thus altered came before the House early in 1821. The House rejected, without a division, the claims of the neighbouring hundreds of Powder and Pyder to the two seats of which everyone was determined that Grampound should be deprived; it rejected, by 126 votes to 66, the rival claims of Yorkshire for the representation which Lord John Russell desired to confer on Leeds.[1] The success of the bill seemed to be assured by these divisions. It was assailed, however, in an unexpected manner. Stuart Wortley, the member for Yorkshire, suddenly proposed that the qualification of each voter in the new borough should be the occupation of a 20*l.* instead of a 10*l.* house. The proposal entirely altered the character of the measure. The bill as it stood would have conferred the franchise on 6,000 or 7,000 persons. The bill, with Stuart Wortley's amendment engrafted on it, would only enfranchise about 2,000 persons. This very reason, however, was the main recommendation of the amendment to the timid majority of the House of Commons. Stuart Wortley's motion was carried, and Lord John Russell dropped the bill.[2] Wortley, however, himself persevered with the measure which Lord John had thus abandoned. The bill was easily carried through its subsequent stages in the House of Commons, and was brought up to the Lords.

It might possibly have been expected that a bill dis-

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 603, 606. [2] Ibid., p. 1075.

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franchising a rotten borough and enfranchising no one who was not a 20*l.* householder in Leeds, would have been accepted without much discussion in the House of Lords. The bill, however, when it reached the Upper House, provoked a great deal of debate. Debate was, in fact, inevitable, for the members of the Cabinet were more divided on the subject of it than any other set of persons. Lord Eldon simply desired to disfranchise the electors of Grampound who had been proved to have been bribed; Lord Liverpool wished to confer the two new seats on Yorkshire; and Lord Harrowby strongly objected to giving four members to a single county. Notwithstanding the decision of the House of Commons to the contrary, and the protests of the great Yorkshire magnate, Lord Harewood, Lord Liverpool's proposal was adopted.[1] The bill, thus amended, in opposition to the decision of the House of Commons, was returned to the Lower House of Parliament. The Commons had the good sense to accept the amendment, instead of entering into a dispute with the Peers, which must have involved the loss of the measure. Grampound was accordingly disfranchised; the two seats were given to Yorkshire; and Lord John Russell gave notice that, in a future session, he should call the attention of the House to the claims of large towns to representation.[2]

Scotch representation.

Parliament had, at length, taken one important step in the direction of Reform. A notoriously corrupt little borough had been deprived of its members; the representation had been transferred to the largest of English counties. A warning had been given to every rotten borough; a precedent had been instituted, which was capable of application to scores of constituencies. The Scotch boroughs were not so corrupt as the English boroughs. Gross corruption implies a certain amount of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. v. pp. 631, 974.

[2] Ibid., p. 1046. The disfranchisement of Grampound only took place from the succeeding dissolution.

independence; and the Scotch voter, as a rule, had not even the opportunity of selling his vote. The borough members were, in Scotland, returned by the corporations; and, as the corporations were self-elected, their political opinions were as constant as their heraldic bearings. Self-elected corporations, however, occasionally make mistakes. In 1817 the magistrates of Montrose actually presumed to elect themselves by ballot. It was the first occasion on which secret voting had ever been applied to any municipal election. The authorities shocked, at the recklessness of a municipality which was capable of committing so palpable an illegality, decided on quashing the election, and on issuing a warrant altering what was called in Scotland the 'set,' or constitution of the borough. Instead of the old councillors electing the new, the warrant authorised the burgesses to elect their own magistrates. It so happened that soon after the issue of this warrant an irregularity occurred in the election of magistrates at Aberdeen. Aberdeen was one of the worst examples of an unreformed corporation. The borough was bankrupt; the revenues were insufficient to pay the interest of its debt; the magistrates were themselves of opinion that some change should be effected in the manner of electing the council, and that an effectual control should be given to the citizens over the expenditure of the town's office-bearers. An opportunity for reforming Aberdeen occurred in 1817. By the constitution of the borough forty persons were appointed to take part in the annual election of the magistrates. In the absence of one of the forty a person, possessing the qualification of the absentee, was required to be elected as proxy for him. In 1817 a proxy was elected who could not prove that he was a burgess. The Government, on being made acquainted with the facts, 'reduced' or voided the election. Instead, however, of declaring a poll election, and authorising the burgesses to elect their own magistrate, as

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they had already done at Montrose, the Government authorised the magistrates to proceed to a fresh election. The magistrates at Aberdeen, in their judgment, had innocently fallen into a trivial error. The magistrates at Montrose had wilfully resorted to an illegal ballot. No treatment could be too tender for Aberdeen; no remedy could be too drastic for Montrose.[1]

Lord Archibald Hamilton

Very early in the session of 1818 Lord Archibald Hamilton drew attention to the case of Montrose. Lord Archibald was the son of the ninth Duke of Hamilton; he was member for Lanarkshire; and he was brother to the 'Dragon' Lady Anne Hamilton, the most faithful friend whom Queen Caroline ever secured. Lord Archibald moved for a copy of the warrant of his Majesty in Council authorising the burgesses of Montrose to elect their magistrates. Castlereagh thought that a motion of this character might lead to Parliamentary Reform. The Lord Advocate repeated his leader's apprehensions. 'If it were intended to introduce a new system of election in all the boroughs it would have the same effect as a sweeping measure of Parliamentary Reform.' Lord Archibald did not venture to divide after the declaration; and his motion was accordingly rejected without a division.[2] But the short debate, and a threat of Lord Archibald's to call attention to the boroughs generally, had convinced the Government that it was necessary to do something. On the 10th of April the Lord Advocate introduced a bill for the better regulating the revenues of the royal boroughs of Scotland. The Lord Advocate proposed that the magistrates should be compelled to publish their accounts, and that the Court of Exchequer, on the complaint of five burgesses, should have the power of controlling the expenditure.[3] The remedy was a mild one; and, mild as the measure was, it was not persevered

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. pp. 1278, 1281, 1282, 1296.
[2] Ibid., xxxvii., pp. 423–438.
[3] Ibid., p. 1291.

in. Its introduction, however, created a profound impression in Scotland. Six-sevenths of the population of the royal boroughs petitioned for Reform. Hardly a single petition was presented on the other side.[1] Lord Archibald Hamilton, finding his case thus strengthened, moved that all the petitions should be referred to a select committee, 'to examine the matter thereof, and to report their observations and opinion shereon to the House.' It was in vain that William Dundas, speaking with the authority which his name gave to him, resisted all change. It was in vain that Canning warned the House against the experiments of rash speculators in Parliamentary Reform. Two months before, on the 3rd of March, the Ministry had been defeated by Sir James Mackintosh on the Criminal Laws. Four days before Grattan's motion for Roman Catholic emancipation had been carried in the teeth of the Tories. Lord Archibald Hamilton's motion was now adopted by 149 votes to 144, or by a majority of 5.[2]

obtains a committee on the royal boroughs.

The committee, which was thus appointed in 1819, was revived in the new Parliament of 1820, and practically continued its labours for three years. Early in 1822, Lord Archibald Hamilton, after referring to the numerous abuses which the reports of the committee had disclosed, moved that the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole House upon the royal boroughs of Scotland. Lord Archibald dwelt on the absurdity of allowing the magistrates to elect their own successors, and insisted on the necessity of instituting some more popular method of election. But the Ministry were not ready to adopt his views. They were willing to impose some checks on the expenditure of the public funds by the magistrates, but they were unwilling to adopt any remedy which would open the door to Reform. The temporary force which petitions had imparted to Lord Archibald's

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxxix. p. 1167. [2] Ibid., vol. xl. p. 197.

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motion was expended; the Opposition, ignorant of Scotland, were languid; Lord Archibald was defeated by a majority of 81 votes to 46; and the Lord Advocate's counter-proposal was adopted. Some checks were placed on the expenditure of the royal burghs; some restrictions were enforced against the improvident creation of debt; but the boroughs themselves were unreformed; the magistrates were allowed to go on electing their own successors; and the whole population of the towns of Scotland were excluded from the franchise as completely as the settlers in the backwoods of Canada.[1]

The labours of Lord John Russell had resulted in the disfranchisement of one rotten borough, and in the grant of two additional members to one great county. The labours of Lord Archibald Hamilton had not been rewarded with even this partial success. Concurrently, however, with these proceedings, the Reformers were agitating for a more general measure. It has been noticed that an Englishman, when he is particularly in earnest, is fond of indulging himself with a good dinner. On the 4th of May, 1821, the Reformers celebrated their cause by a great dinner at the London Tavern. Some of the most popular members of the Whig party in the House of Commons attended the dinner; and Lushington, who had been associated with Denman and Brougham in the defence of the queen, distinguished himself among them all for the vigour, or rather the violence, of the language which he used at it. Burdett, suffering three months' imprisonment for a letter which he had written reflecting on the conduct of the Manchester magistrates,[2] was, of course, unable to attend the banquet. He addressed, however, from his prison a letter to the company the language of which was, perhaps, less violent, but unquestionably more personal, than Lushington's speech.

The Reform dinner at the London Tavern.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., p. 81. 3rd George IV., c. 91. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. vi. pp. 519–555.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 26.

Alluding to Canning's known opposition to Reform, he wrote: 'That Mr. Canning—I mention him as the champion of the party—a part for the whole—should defend, to the uttermost, a system by the hocus-pocus tricks of which he and his family get so much public money, can cause neither me nor any man surprise or anger—

> "For, 'tis their duty, all the learned think,
> To espouse that cause by which they eat and drink."

The language was so strong, the imputation so gross, that Canning thought it necessary to notice it. He waited till Burdett was liberated from gaol, and then sent Lord William Bentinck to him with a challenge. Burdett disclaimed all intention of making any personal allusion; Canning acknowledged his frankness and promptitude in doing so; and, with mutual compliments, the affair dropped. It is now only worth reviving as an instructive illustration of the ways and manners of leading public men half a century ago.[1]

Debate on Reform in 1821.

The episode between Burdett and Canning had been easily concluded. The attitude of the Reformers in Parliament provoked two great debates in the session of 1821. Lambton, the member for Durham, brought forward the subject on the 17th of April. Lambton was in favour of electoral districts and household suffrage. The debate which he raised lasted through the entire night, and was adjourned till the following day. It was evident, however, that the House took only the faintest interest in the proceedings. The benches were empty; Lambton was himself absent, and a general desire arose to conclude the subject. A division was loudly called for by the few members who were present, and the motion was disposed of by 55 votes to 43.[2] The defeat of Lambton's motion, however, prepared the way for a more formidable

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., p. 93.
[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. pp. 359–453.

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opponent. On the 9th of May, Lord John Russell asked the House to adopt four resolutions, affirming the prevalence of corruption and the expediency of giving representation to wealthy and populous places. The House again displayed an extraordinary impatience of discussion. A division was loudly called for the moment Lord John's seconder had sat down; and the House listened with evident impatience to a short speech from Bathurst, who represented the Government on the occasion, and who moved the previous question. Bathurst's motion was carried by 155 votes to 124;[1] and the question of Parliamentary Reform was thus again indefinitely postponed.

and in 1822.

Lord John Russell, however, still persevered with his favourite project. A good many circumstances conspired in 1822 to encourage him to do so. The continuous distress of the agricultural classes had led to extraordinary excitement in the rural districts. Language was held in quiet country parishes which had previously only been heard in the largest and most disorderly towns. The Reformers found their most enthusiastic audiences in country gentlemen and tenant-farmers; and the great agricultural counties petitioned for Reform in the most vehement language. Unexpectedly backed by the classes which had hitherto been distinguished for their unprogressive Conservatism, Lord John Russell, on the 25th of April, moved 'that the present state of the representation of the people requires most serious consideration.' The debate which ensued was chiefly memorable for the speech with which Canning concluded it. That speech was long afterwards remembered for the extraordinary vigour of its eloquence, and for the uncompromising determination of the orator to oppose all Parliamentary Reform. 'A change in the constitution of the House of Commons,' said Canning, 'is the object of the present motion. That

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. v. p. 624.

such a change is necessary the noble lord asserts—and I deny. I deny altogether the existence of any such practical defect in the present constitution of this House as requires the adoption of so fearful an experiment. That the noble lord will carry his motion this evening I have no fear; but, with the talents which he has shown himself to possess, he will no doubt renew his efforts hereafter. Although I presume not to expect that he will give any weight to observations or warnings of mine, yet I cannot help conjuring him to pause before he again presses this motion on the country. If, however, he shall persevere, and if his perseverance shall be successful—and if the results of that success shall be such as I cannot help apprehending—his be the triumph to have precipitated those results—be mine the consolation that to the utmost and the latest of my power I have opposed them.' The magnificent peroration delighted a House which was peculiarly fond of eloquent declamation. But, magnificent as the declamation was, the Reformers mustered in strength in the division which immediately followed. Lord John Russell was defeated by 269 votes to 164.[1] The minority, however, was the largest which the Reformers had assembled since the early days of Pitt's Administration. It afforded a promise of future success.

During the remainder of the Parliament of 1820 little further progress was made by the Reformers. In 1823, indeed, Lord John Russell renewed his efforts. The sufferings of the agricultural classes had created, at the time, a strong desire for considerable changes; and the farmers, rebelling against their ordinary leaders, had passed Radical resolutions at the dictation of Cobbett and other agitators. Strengthened by the support which meetings of this character afforded him, Lord John Rus-

In 1823.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist. pp. 68–79. *Hansard*, vol. vii. pp. 51, 136, 139. Mr. Lowe concluded one of his great speeches against Reform in 1866 in almost the exact words which Canning had thus used in 1822. *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. clxxxii. p. 164.

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1826.

sell, at the commencement of the session, moved for a select committee to inquire into the number of voters in each constituency. The motion was resisted by Canning, and defeated by 128 votes to 90.[1] Without allowing himself to be disheartened by this defeat, and stimulated to further action by the petitions for Reform, 'which crowded the table of the House,' Lord John, at a later period of the session, brought forward another motion in favour of Reform. The effect of agricultural discontent was visible in the division list. Sturdy Tories, like Sir Thomas Lethbridge, supported Lord John Russell, but his motion, notwithstanding their support, was rejected by 280 votes to 169.[2] Three years elapsed after this defeat before Lord John ventured on renewing his favourite motion. Towards the close of the session of 1826, when the Parliament of 1820 was dying of extreme old age, he made one more effort for the cause of the Reformers. But the eve of a general election was an unfortunate period for raising the subject, and Lord John was defeated by 247 votes to 123.[3] In the same session, however, he achieved a more gratifying success in a kindred enterprise. He obtained leave to introduce a bill for the better prevention of bribery at elections. The bill proposed that disputed elections should be referred to a select committee chosen by lot. The measure met with only moderate support. Despairing of passing it through Parliament, Lord John dropped his bill, and in the last week of the session proposed two resolutions committing the House to its principle. The resolutions led to a sharp debate, and resulted in a division, in which each side secured 62 votes. The Speaker, amidst some excitement, gave his vote with the Ayes, and the resolutions were accordingly carried.[4]

In 1826.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 187.
[2] Ibid., p. 1287.
[3] Ibid., vol. xv. p. 714.
[4] Ibid., vol. xiv. pp. 1003, 1365; and vol. xv. pp. 733, 1410.

Lord John Russell's persevering efforts had done little or nothing towards the reform of Parliamentary representation. Lord Archibald Hamilton's attempt to extend the electoral franchise to the Scotch people had, in the meanwhile, been equally unsuccessful. Up to 1822, Lord Archibald had mainly occupied himself with exposing the abuses inherent in the royal boroughs. In 1823 he drew attention for the first time to the state of representation in the Scotch counties. The right of voting in Scotch counties, it has already been stated, was confined to the feudal superiors. The total number of persons thus qualified to vote in all Scotland amounted, in 1820, to only two thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine. No other Scotch county had so many voters as Fife; yet the electoral franchise in Fife was confined to 240 people. The feudal superior, moreover, had not necessarily any real landed estate in the county: his superiority was frequently disjoined from the land. The feudal superiors, however, possessed the monopoly of the representation; and the members for the Scotch counties, like the members for the rotten boroughs, owed their seats to the few fortunate individuals who thus happened to enjoy a monopoly of political power.

County representation in Scotland.

Late in the session of 1823 Lord Archibald Hamilton drew attention to this anomalous state of things, and proposed a series of five resolutions, embodying the facts of the case, and affirming the necessity for some alteration in the system. Lord Archibald did not contemplate any very radical measure of Reform. He desired simply to extend the franchise to the owners of real property in each county, and thus 'to establish some connexion between the right of voting and the land.' Such a proposal was obviously moderate. The franchise, which Lord Archibald desired to introduce in Scotland, already existed both in England and in Ireland. It required some ingenuity to discover any danger in extend-

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ing to Scotch proprietors a privilege which was already enjoyed by English and Irish landowners. The Tory party opposed Lord Archibald Hamilton, less from any objection to the particular proposal which he was advocating, than from a dislike to touch the question of Reform at all. The Whigs, however, rallied in Lord Archibald's support. Many of the more moderate Tories stayed away, and the motion was only rejected by 152 votes to 117. The Reformers had rarely had a more favourable division; and they openly expressed their hope that the strength which they thus displayed in the lobby might increase their chances of future success.[1]

The representation of Edinburgh.

In 1824 the question of Scotch representation was again brought forward; but its management passed into the hands of a politician who has already been mentioned in this chapter, James Abercromby, the younger brother of Lord Abercromby. Evading the larger question, which Lord Archibald Hamilton had raised, Abercromby fastened on the anomalous condition of a single Scotch borough. Edinburgh was the capital of Scotland; it comprised one hundred thousand inhabitants; its citizens were exceptionally distinguished for their education and their acquirements. Its University had attracted the ablest staff which had ever been collected in any one educational centre. Every Scotchman was proud of the ancient city, which was inseparably identified with the history of its country. Every Englishman had heard of the picturesque town, whose situation, whose annals, whose society, and whose citizens offered so many points of interest to the tourist and the student. Yet the member for Edinburgh was elected by only thirty-three persons, the magistrates and town council of the borough. Out of these thirty-three persons nineteen nominated their own successors; the remaining fourteen were elected by the incorporated trades,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. pp. 611–642.

amounting to about 700 persons. Thirty-three individuals, not necessarily possessing any property in the town, perhaps of no social standing and of no particular acquirements, monopolised the representation of the capital of Scotland. So little interest was, however, felt in the matter in 1824, that Abercromby could hardly collect a House to listen to his arguments for a reform in the representation of Edinburgh. His motion was rejected by 99 votes to 75. Discouraged by the defeat, he waited till 1826 before he renewed his motion. William Dundas, the member for the city, a cousin to Lord Melville, gravely told him that the success of his motion would involve a breach of the Treaty of Union. Dundas had some reason for using an exaggerated argument. Lord Melville was the patron of all Scotland; he had the patronage of all Scotland in his hands.[1] The Dundases naturally obtained some seasonable pickings from this arrangement, and William Dundas, Lord Clerk Register, Keeper of the Signet, and Register of the Sasines, in Scotland, had not been forgotten. Liberal members might laugh at the notion of Abercromby's success involving a breach of the Treaty of Union, but there was no question that it would have occasioned a very serious loss to patrons like Lord Melville. The House, however, rallied as usual in the defence of monopolists. Abercromby was beaten by 122 votes to 97,[2] and Dundas had the satisfaction of saving the privileges of his thirty-three constituents.

Up to the close of 1826, then, no practical progress had been made in any of the religious and political questions which were attracting the attention of liberal-minded men. The Church still enjoyed a monopoly in religion. A few isolated individuals still enjoyed a monopoly in politics. A man who was not a Churchman was theoretically incapable of exercising the rights of a

[1] Lockhart's *Scott*, p. 87. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xv. p. 190.

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citizen. The great body of the nation had practically no concern in the affairs of the Government. Every attempt at Reform, every argument for religious freedom, was met by the determined opposition of the Tory party; and enlightened statesmen, finding themselves always in a minority and continually excluded from office, despaired of obtaining the success of their own views or of defeating their determined opponents. Contemporary statesmen might, indeed, well despair. A long succession of reverses disheartens the best troops. Constant ill-success must equally deprive the most energetic politicians of all hope. Yet it is easy to see now that the legislation which the Parliament of 1820 had adopted was silently pointing to Reforms, both in Church and in State. The Parliament of 1820 had destroyed monopolies in trade. It left to its successors the task of destroying monopolies in politics and religion.

CHAPTER IX.

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1816.

The arrangements after Waterloo.

THE victory of Waterloo, and the arrangements which followed the battle, gave the great military nations of Europe nearly forty years of peace. The first-rate powers of the Continent were not again arrayed in arms against one another till an entire generation had passed away. The lesser powers, however, did not derive the same advantages from the negotiations which followed the victory. Whole nations were handed over to czar or king without any reference to their own feelings. Countries whose geographical position made their annexation impracticable were consigned to the rule or misrule of their hereditary sovereigns. The restoration of the Bourbons to France was followed by the restoration of the Bourbons to Spain and Naples. The illustrious diplomatists of the Continent were too deeply interested in maintaining the divine right of kings to ignore the claims of the minor potentates of Continental Europe.

Spain.

There are few subjects which deserve more consideration from the world at large, and from Englishmen in particular, than the history of the decline and fall of Spain. Up to a certain point there is a striking similarity between the history of Spain and that of this country. Spain, like the United Kingdom, originally consisted of different states. The people of Castille and Aragon, on their union at the end of the fifteenth century, enjoyed greater liberties than the English or the Scotch had obtained at that time. The many admirable qualities which Isabella the Catholic possessed undoubtedly proved

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The reign of Isabella.

of the highest advantage to the kingdom which she was called upon to govern. Her policy in many respects resembled the course which, in a succeeding generation, was pursued by Elizabeth of England. Fortunately, however, for her subjects, Elizabeth inherited from her mother the Protestant principles of the Reformed Church. Unfortunately for Spain, Isabella was above all things a Catholic. Elizabeth's first object was the increase of the glory, of the wealth, of the worldly happiness of her subjects. Isabella's first object was the promotion of the Catholic religion. A country which was not Catholic could not in her judgment be happy. In consequence of this unfortunate belief her naturally kind heart was impelled to the commission of the most merciless cruelties. Jew and Moor were relentlessly driven from the Peninsula, and free thought and free will effectually burned out by the fires of the Inquisition. Isabella's subjects imitated to a great extent the merciless bigotry of their monarch. In Elizabeth's reign the English sailor ventured into unknown seas for the sake of the wealth and glory which were certain to secure him welcome from his queen on his return. The Spaniard in Isabella's reign conquered vast territories for the sake of increasing the sway of the Pope of Rome. On strict grounds of morality it is perhaps impossible to justify the expeditions either of a Hawkins or of a Cortes. But Hawkins never claimed a higher sanction for his acts than was afforded by his sword. Cortes was in the habit of justifying his least justifiable proceedings by an appeal to his faith.

The causes which produced the fall of Spain and the rise of England are to be traced in the reigns of Elizabeth and Isabella. Both queens left their countries in enjoyment of a material prosperity which they had never previously known; but the two queens were succeeded by very different descendants. Twelve years after the death of Isabella, her grandson, Charles, the greatest

general of his age, mounted her throne. Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands, united in his person, engaged in a series of military expeditions, in which the Spanish infantry acquired an imperishable reputation, but from which Spain derived neither wealth nor advantage. Half a century after her death, her great grandson, Philip, imitating only too faithfully her own example, forced the Netherlands into revolt, and occupied a whole reign in a vain endeavour to recover a dominion which his folly and his bigotry had lost. The Spaniards forgot their privileges amidst the glories which Charles V. won for them; they forgot their own liberties in their determination to extirpate liberty from the Netherlands. England, on the contrary, was reserved for a different fate. 'King' Elizabeth, as the elder Disraeli observes, was succeeded by 'Queen' James. The worthless pedant was succeeded by his well-intentioned but misjudging son. The extravagance of the Stuarts made them dependent on the people. Selden, Hampden, Pym, and Eliot stood at bay against the court. The crown fell, and with the fall of the crown the liberties of the people were assured. Forty years, indeed, elapsed before the fruits of the Civil War were finally secured. The military government of Cromwell was, in some respects, more injurious to freedom than the illegal exactions of the two first Stuart kings. The restoration of Charles II. reproduced the illegalities of his father. But the time had gone when a bad sovereign could be allowed to curse the country permanently with arbitrary government. The Stuarts were driven out of the kingdom amidst the general execration of the nation; and the people, learning wisdom from experience, found it was useless to change a king without changing a system, and slowly and laboriously battered out the constitutional checks on the sovereign which were the noblest work of the Revolution of 1688.

The reigns of Charles V. and Philip II.

contrasted with the Stuarts of England.

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Ever since the Revolution of 1688, England, secure in the enjoyment of the blessings of freedom, has prospered. Her wealth has been continually increasing; her dominion has been constantly extended; and, with a few exceptional occasions, her population has been acquiring fresh influence in her government. Ever since the reign of Philip II., on the contrary, Spain has been deprived of social and religious freedom. Her empire has been gradually contracted; her trade has been constantly reduced; her population has been impoverished, her treasury emptied, and her influence annihilated. Spain, which, three centuries ago, was the most powerful among the nations of Europe, is one of the most impotent of them all.

The fall of Spain.

A weak and languid Government controlled the fortunes of Spain in 1807. Godoï, the Prince of Peace, exercised an almost boundless influence over the mind of his sovereign, Charles IV. Ferdinand, heir to the throne, dissatisfied at the favourite's power, entered into a secret intrigue with Napoleon. Napoleon rapidly took advantage of the divisions at the Spanish court. Under the pretext of partitioning the neighbouring kingdom of Portugal, he marched a strong force into the Peninsula, and seized some of the most important positions in the country. Charles IV. was urged to imitate the example of the neighbouring house of Braganza, and to withdraw to his colonial dominions in America. But the nation prevented the realisation of a scheme to which the weak king would probably have subscribed. The Prince of Peace was arrested; Charles IV. was persuaded to abdicate, and Ferdinand mounted the throne.

The abdication of Charles IV.

Ferdinand was no better match for Napoleon than his weak and incompetent father. He was tricked to meet the emperor at Bayonne; and found himself, for all practical purposes, a prisoner. Charles was persuaded by the French to resume the power, which he had for-

mally laid down; with equal ease he was induced to renounce it in favour of Napoleon. Napoleon made his brother Joseph King of Spain, and, with characteristic energy, devised a new constitution for the unhappy country. Spain, for the moment stunned by the suddenness of the blow which had thus been inflicted on her, submitted to French dictation. But the calm which prevailed was only momentary. The nation rose against the French; they achieved an important success at Baylen; they proved their constancy and their fortitude at Saragossa; and the struggle commenced which, in its ultimate results, proved as disastrous to Napoleon as the flames of Moscow or the frosts of Russia.

Joseph Buonaparte made king.

Ferdinand the Bourbon was restored to the throne of Spain; and no sovereign ever had a harder task before him than that to which he succeeded. A Cortes, nominally representing the kingdom, but in reality chosen by the few towns which, in 1812, had been free from the presence of the French, usurped the authority of the State. Its democratic views, its oppressive measures, had offended the majority of the nation. Ferdinand was welcomed as the liberator of his country from its dictation. '*Viva il re assoluto!*' was the shout which was raised and reiterated as he approached. Impelled by the voice of the nation, deceived by the universal unpopularity of the Cortes, Ferdinand ventured to annul all its acts and to restore absolute government to Spain. The king, indeed, while abolishing the Cortes of 1812, promised to take immediate steps for convening a new one. But the burst of popularity which greeted him in the first instance, and the injudicious advice of the counsellors by whom he was surrounded, prevented him from fulfilling his promises. The new Cortes was not convoked, and the Inquisition, in a moderate form, was reconstituted.

The restoration of the Bourbon.

The dissolution of Cortes.

The Spaniards had hailed with pleasure the dissolution

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of an assembly which had not fairly represented their country; they cheered to the echo the monarch who had had the courage to dismiss it. But the dismissal of the Cortes had been popular because it had been regarded as an indispensable step towards the convocation of a new one. As soon as it was evident that the king's advisers were bent on the institution of arbitrary government, the unpopularity which had been concentrated on the Cortes descended on Ferdinand. Serious disturbances broke out in different parts of the country; and, though they were suppressed, the severity which attended their suppression increased the unpopularity of the new Government. Every fresh riot afforded the friends of arbitrary rule a new excuse for repressive measures; every fresh measure of repression afforded the friends of liberal administration a new excuse for rebellion. Absolutists and liberals, arrayed against each other, were driven to plot and counterplot: to obscure rebellion on the one side, and to unjustifiable severity on the other.

Discontent and disturbances.

The Spanish colonies.

There was, however, one subject on which men of all parties were agreed. Every Spaniard was proud of the magnificent empire which Spanish valour had won for Spain in the New World. The Transatlantic dependencies of Spain exceeded in extent the enormous colonial empire which Britain has acquired. They were originally divided into two huge vice-royalties. The vice-royalty of Mexico comprised all the dominions of Spain in North America; the vice-royalty of Peru comprised all her possessions in South America. But as time wore on these huge vice-royalties were subdivided for the purposes of government. The vice-royalty of New Granada was carved out of the northern territory of Peru; the vice-royalty of the Rio de la Plata was cut off from Peru on the south. Even these four vice-royalties proved too cumbrous for the purposes of government. The territory of Venezuela, on the north-east coast of South America; the territory of

Chili, on the south-west coast of the same continent; the territory of Guatemala, the link between North and South America; the huge island of Cuba and the adjacent coasts of Florida; Porto Rico and the other West India islands belonging to Spain, were formed into separate captains-generalships. The magnificent transatlantic possessions of Spain were thus placed under four viceroys and five captains-general.

It is impossible, in a history of England, to trace either the cause or the progress of the rebellion which led ultimately to the independence of South America. During the earlier years Spain was, on the whole, successful. Hidalgo, who had dared the authority of Spain in Mexico, was defeated and put to death. Miranda, who had been the first to raise the standard of revolt, and who had been the most powerful of the rebels, was dead. Bolivar, who succeeded Miranda, experienced an apparently decisive defeat. Revolutionary Juntas in Columbia and Buenos Ayres, however, still defied the authority of the mother country. In 1817 the Junta at Buenos Ayres sent an army into Chili, and in two victories drove the Spaniards from that colony. It was abundantly evident that the authority of Spain in the New World was again tottering to its fall, and that nothing but the most decisive measures could lead to its restoration.

Decisive measures could, however, be taken only with difficulty by the exhausted and divided country in which Ferdinand was asserting his absolute authority. Spain, in the days of her prosperity, had depended for her wealth on her Transatlantic possessions; and the rebellions of the last ten years had emptied her treasury and reduced her resources. A vast continent could not be reconquered without a considerable force, and Spain had neither the money nor the ships for equipping a great armament. Spain, in 1818, was in a state of extreme exhaustion.

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'Nothing I could say,' wrote a British resident, 'could convey to you an adequate idea of the wretchedness, misery, want of credit confidence and trade which exist from one end of the country to the other. The army is naked and unpaid; navy there is none; and the roads are covered with bands of forty or fifty robbers each.'[1]

The sale of the Floridas.

Under these circumstances Spain was glad of the opportunity of purchasing some worn-out frigates from Russia, and of disposing of a portion of her colonial empire to the United States. The sale of the Floridas to the United States was, indeed, doubly advantageous to the Spanish Government. It provided Spain, in the first instance, with a little ready money; it also relieved her from a serious international difficulty. The northern boundary of Florida was separated from the southern boundary of the States by 'an imaginary line,' which it was impossible to guard, and which it was easy to pass. The 'imaginary line' was constantly passed and repassed by the aboriginal inhabitants of the district, the Seminole Indians. The Seminoles made a raid into the United States and retreated, when they were pursued, into the territory of Spain. As the authority of Spain had ceased to exist the President of the United States claimed the right to pursue the enemy into Spanish territory, and ordered the United States troops to do so.[2]

Preparations for a fresh expedition to America,

A state of things, therefore, had obviously arisen which might at any moment have led to war. War was avoided by the sale of the Floridas to the United States for 5,000,000 dollars.[3] The sale provided Spain with a

[1] Sir P. Roche to Mr. E. Cooke, Oct. 22, 1818.—*Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xii. p. 73.

[2] See *Ann. Reg.*, 1818, Hist., pp. 171–180. *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 524–557.

[3] The United States had a claim against Spain of 3,000,000 dollars for spoliations upon its commerce. They offered to abandon their claim if the Floridas were sold to them for 5,000,000 dollars. Spain, therefore, in addition to 5,000,000 dollars in hard cash, got rid of an inconvenient claim of 3,000,000 dollars. (See Chas. Bagot's letter to Lord Castlereagh, *Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xi. p. 345.)

little money, and left her free to deal with her insurgent provinces. Russia was readily prevailed upon to sell her some old frigates. Badly built originally of pitch-pine, worn out by long service, the crazy vessels were hardly equal to a voyage from the Baltic to Cadiz. It was utterly impossible to despatch them across the Atlantic until they were repaired, and their repair necessarily occupied some months. In the interval the troops, which had been collected for the expedition in the Isle of Leon, became more and more discontented. Ill fed, ill clothed, ill paid, they murmured against the necessity of embarking on crazy vessels for a king whom they did not reverence, and in a cause which they did not understand. Their murmurs were so loud that they reached the ears of the authorities. O'Donnell, Count Abisbal, one of the most famous of Spanish generals, hastily collected a considerable force, and, surrounding the camp of the mutineers, awed them into obedience. Three thousand of them were embarked and despatched to America. These measures quelled the mutiny for a time; but the threatened outbreak proved fatal to the expedition. The Spanish Government, nervously afraid of everyone, removed O'Donnell from his command. The advanced guard of 3,000 men carried the ships in which they sailed into Buenos Ayres and passed over to the insurgents. A serious outbreak of yellow fever at Cadiz compelled the Government to postpone the main expedition; and, through the whole of 1819, no further steps were taken to quell the insurrection in South America.[1]

which is abandoned.

While, however, Spain relaxed her efforts to subdue her colonies, the insurgents freed themselves more and more from the control of the mother country. Their own efforts were gradually achieving their independence; and their own efforts were nobly seconded by volunteers from Britain. Englishmen have an instinctive hatred of

The insurgents receive aid from Britain.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., p. 178.

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autocratic government; they have an instinctive desire to array themselves under any standard which may be raised in the name of freedom in any part of the world. The same feeling which, eleven years afterwards, led to the battle of Navarino, roused the nation to support the cause of South American independence in 1816.

England, moreover, was largely reducing her armaments. Large numbers of officers and men found themselves without employment and without any very clear means of obtaining remunerative work. It was almost inevitable that these men, who were inured to war, should be ready to dispose of their services to any power prepared to engage them. Soon after the peace several British officers left this country to enter the service of the insurgents; the number became so considerable that the Government thought it necessary to notify that officers enlisting on foreign service without license would lose their half-pay. This step, however, had no effect. The disposition to enter the service of the insurgents was not checked. 'Soldiers were raised, regiments formed, uniforms of various descriptions prepared, and considerable bodies of men openly embarked for South America.'[1] A battalion was paid off at Chatham, and 300 men immediately enlisted in the service of the insurgents.[2] The English, however, did more than fill the ranks of the insurgents. Lord Cochrane, the eldest son of the Earl of Dundonald, was one of the most brilliant sailors in the British navy. In 1801, while in command of a little brig, manned by only fifty-four men and boys, and armed with only four small guns, he had attacked and taken the 'El Gamo,' a Spanish frigate with 32 guns and 319 men. In 1809 he had been selected to command the fireships which, laden with combustibles, had thrown themselves on the French fleet in Basque

Lord Cochrane joins them.

[1] Lord Bathurst, in House of Lords. (*Hansard*, vol. xl. p. 1379.)

[2] C. Wynn, in House of Commons. (Ibid., p. 886.)

Roads. Nelson himself had never displayed more skill and more daring than this brilliant officer. His exploits gave him great popularity among his fellow-countrymen. His advanced political opinions made him peculiarly acceptable to a large constituency, and Cochrane was elected member for Westminster. While he was member for Westminster the circumstance occurred which led to his expulsion from the House of Commons. A gentleman in French uniform suddenly arrived at Dover, announced the fall of Napoleon, and hurriedly posted to Lord Cochrane's house in London. The Funds rose; Lord Cochrane's uncle sold his stock, and made a large sum of money; and it was usually supposed that Lord Cochrane himself derived some advantage from the officer's visit to his house. He was indicted with others for a conspiracy to defraud, and was convicted. The severity of the sentence which Lord Ellenborough passed on him caused the opinion of the public to react in his favour. The Government were compelled to remit the greater part of the punishment. Cochrane, though expelled from the House of Commons, was immediately re-elected by his constituents; and circumstances which would have tarnished the reputation of most men only increased the popularity of this brilliant officer.

Cochrane joined the insurgents in 1818. In November of that year he arrived at Valparaiso, and was made at once Vice-Admiral of Chili. He was the very man of whom the insurgents stood in need. The terror of his name caused the Spanish men-of-war to abandon the seas; his presence infused new life into the insurgents' cause, new vigour into their operations. The enthusiasm of the British nation for the insurgents was increased when the hero of the Basque Roads became their most prominent leader; and men gladly joined a service where Cochrane was in command who would have hesitated to place themselves under the standard of Bolivar.

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Cochrane, however, had never been popular either at the Admiralty or on the Ministerial benches of the House of Commons. At the Admiralty he was regarded as a troublesome officer, opposed to mere routine, and in the habit of pressing his own claims and those of his subordinates with a heat which was inconvenient and distasteful to the officials. In the House of Commons he was considered as an intemperate politician, prepared to endorse the extreme views of the Radicals out of doors, and ready at any time to present their most offensive petitions. An enthusiastic Reformer of this description was not likely to be popular among the members of Lord Liverpool's Administration. His adherence to the insurgents was not calculated to make them sympathise with the cause of South American independence. But the Ministry could under no circumstances have continued to ignore the armed expeditions which were continually leaving this country for South America. Two Acts, passed in the reign of George II., made it felony for any British subject to enter into the service of any foreign state. Under these Acts it would have been illegal for any British subject to have enlisted in the armies of the King of Spain. But the insurgent colonies of Spain had not been recognised as states. From the accident that they had not been so recognised the Acts of George II. did not apply to British subjects enlisting in their service. The Ministry consequently proposed that it should be made illegal for a British subject to enter the service, not merely of a foreign king, prince, or potentate, but also of 'a colony or district who do assume the powers of a government.' By another clause of the bill they forbade the fitting out of a vessel for the purposes of war.

The Foreign Enlistment Act.

It is difficult to see how any Ministry could have avoided proposing some such measure as the Foreign Enlistment Act. But the Opposition were determined to

resist it. They sympathised with the colonists in their struggle with the mother country; they thought that the autocratic Government at Madrid had no right to demand any alteration of the laws in their own favour; and they insisted that Spain had forfeited any claim to our consideration by selling the Floridas to the United States, our chief rival in the New World. 'The historical records of England,' said Mackintosh, 'afforded innumerable instances of British troops serving under foreign belligerents without subjecting themselves to any penalty. A Catholic regiment served in the Spanish service in Flanders under Lord Arundel of Wardour; a regiment of Scotch Catholics, commanded by the Earl of Home, entered the service of the King of France. In neither instance was any breach of neutrality supposed to have taken place. The celebrated Bynkershoek, president of the courts of Holland, denied that it was a breach of neutrality to allow a friendly belligerent to levy troops in your territory. Gustavus Adolphus had in his pay a band of six thousand men raised in Scotland, and led by the Marquis of Hamilton. The Spanish and Imperial ambassadors were resident in London, but neither of them presumed to remonstrate. It was expressly laid down by Vattel that a nation did not commit a breach of neutrality by allowing its subjects to enter the service of one belligerent, and refusing the same permission with respect to another. There was one case more. In the reign of James I. a great body of English troops, commanded by Sir Horace Vere, served against the Spaniards, and received pay from a foreign power. Yet Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, dared not go so far as to require the boon which his Majesty's Ministers now called on the House of Commons of England to have the condescension to grant.' Sir James Mackintosh's speech made a profound impression on the House. But neither his learning nor his eloquence affected the

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issue. The Foreign Enlistment Act was passed through all its stages and became law.[1]

The mutiny of the Spanish army.

The time was, however, gone when the sympathy of a foreign state could have restored the tottering authority of the Spanish monarchy. On the first day of February, 1820, a military revolt of unprecedented importance broke out among the troops in Andalusia, in the extreme south-west of Spain. The mutineers placed themselves under the command of two energetic officers —Colonel Riego and Lieutenant-Colonel Quiroga—who found themselves at the head of a considerable force. Baffled, however, in an attempt on Cadiz, and receiving no active aid from the surrounding population, the mutiny seemed likely to terminate in failure. O'Donnell, the brother of the general, who had suppressed the revolt of the previous year, drove Diego into the mountainous district of Ronda, in Granada. Quiroga with 4,000 troops was hopelessly shut up by General Freyre in the Isle of Leon. The rebellion in the South of Spain seemed on the point of being suppressed, when the news of it was slowly brought to Galicia, in the extreme north-west. The troops at Corunna and at Ferrol, animated by the news, threw off their allegiance and imitated the example which had been set them by Diego and Quiroga. The Government of Ferdinand was thrown into perplexity by these various rebellions; and a still more formidable defection completed the revolution. O'Donnell, Count Abisbal, had in the previous year restored the royal authority. The shabby treatment which he had experienced from Ferdinand had probably rankled in his breast. Hastily leaving Madrid, he proclaimed the Constitution at Oçana. The troops immediately pronounced in his favour; Ferdinand, isolated by the defection, found himself unable to continue resistance. Making a

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xl. pp. 362-374, 858, 867-910, 1083-1117, 1232-1285, 1377-1416. *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 71-76.

virtue of necessity, he consented to summon the Cortes and to swear fidelity to the Constitution. The Cortes rapidly removed every trace of the autocratic Government of the preceding six years. 'New commercial regulations were adopted; the press was declared free; entails were abolished; all the convents and monasteries, except eight, were dissolved, and the revenues were ordered to be applied to the payment of the national debt.'[1]

The Spanish Constitution proclaimed.

These events, rapidly succeeding one another, in Spain made the most profound impression on the people of other nations. But there were two countries to which the revolutionary movement in Spain was particularly liable to spread. Portugal was united to Spain by nature; Naples by the blood of her sovereign. The rebellion in Andalusia and the rebellion in Galicia had broken out in provinces which marched with the northern and southern boundaries of Portugal; and Portugal happened to be in a condition which made it peculiarly susceptible to disaffection. Ever since 1807 Portugal had not known a court. On the first threat of French invasion the Regent had emigrated to the Brazils, and he had since lived and ruled entirely in the great Transatlantic colony. The ordinary conditions of other countries had been reversed. Portugal had virtually become a dependency of her own colony. The absence of the court was a sore trial to the pride of the Portuguese. An absent court had few supporters. It happened, too, that its ablest defender had lately left the country on a visit to Brazil. Marshal Beresford had made a great reputation in the Peninsula. His memorable stand at Albuera was properly regarded as one of the most brilliant achievements of the war; and his subsequent organisation of the Portuguese army, of which he still retained the command, made him one of the most powerful men in the country. Unfortunately,

The revolution extends to Portugal.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1819, Hist., pp. 178, 181; and Hist., 1820, pp. 221-231.

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in April 1820 Beresford sailed for the Brazils. He did not return till the following October; and the revolution had been completed before his return. On the 24th of August the troops at Oporto determined on establishing a constitutional government, and appointed a provisional Junta with this object. The Regency which conducted the affairs of the country at Lisbon denounced the movement as a nefarious conspiracy. But, however nefarious the conspiracy might be, the defection of the army was so general that resistance became impossible. On the 1st of September the Regency issued a proclamation promising to convene the Cortes. The promise, however, did not stop the progress of the insurrection. The Junta which had been constituted at Oporto marched at the head of the troops upon Lisbon. The troops at Lisbon and in the south of Portugal threw off their allegiance, and established a Junta of their own. The Junta at Lisbon were, for the moment, in favour of milder measures than the Junta of Oporto. But the advocates of the more extreme course won their ends. The Oporto troops, surrounding the two Juntas, which had been blended together, compelled them to adopt the Spanish constitution; in other words, to sanction the election of one deputy to the Cortes for every 30,000 persons inhabiting the country.[1]

Naples.

Revolution was not confined to Spain and Portugal. A rebellion more formidable than that at Oporto occurred about the same time in Naples. The kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been united in 1735 under Charles III., son of the King of Spain. In 1759 Charles succeeded to the Spanish throne; and his third son thereupon became King of the Two Sicilies, under the title of Ferdinand IV. Ferdinand, with Nelson's assistance, maintained his authority at Naples till 1806. The French entered Naples at the beginning of that year. Napoleon, in the first instance, placed his brother Joseph, and subsequently

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 232–338.

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his brilliant lieutenant, Murat, on the throne; and Ferdinand was compelled to retire to the island of Sicily. The tragic events of 1815 effected his restoration. Ferdinand was re-established at Naples. Adversity, however, had not taught the old king wisdom. His government had been bad and tyrannical before 1806; it was bad and tyrannical after 1815.[1] Oppressive taxation sowed the seeds of rebellion; and a secret organisation, whose origin had been recent, but whose growth had been rapid, afforded the requisite machinery for effecting a revolution. Some years before a few discontented republicans had retired from Naples to the Abruzzi and Calabria. The trade of the district to which they thus migrated was charcoal-burning; and from this circumstance they took the name of Carbonari, or charcoal-burners. Gradually acquiring strength and influence, their lodges ramified throughout Italy, till nearly 700,000 persons joined the society. In the eyes of autocracy the society was a 'secte ténébreuse dont les chefs secrets ne cessaient de méditer la destruction de tous les gouvernemens.' Murat, bent on conquering all Italy, deigned to appeal to them. Ferdinand, restored by Austrian bayonets to his throne, did his best to neutralise them. The power of the Carbonari had either ceased or their activity had declined, when the news of the revolution in Spain threw fresh spirit into their counsels. The Neapolitan troops caught the infection. Early on the morning of the 2nd of July a cavalry regiment stationed at Nola raised a tricolour flag[2] and proclaimed the Constitution. The troops detached to quell the revolt made common cause with the

The Spanish Constitution proclaimed in Naples.

[1] Sir W. A'Court, the British Minister at Naples, wrote to Lord Castlereagh of the Two Sicilies, as 'a kingdom in the highest degree flourishing and happy, under the mildest of Governments, and by no means oppressed by the weight of taxation.'—*Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xii. p. 279. Sir W. A'Court's letter shows how little trust can be placed in the reports of envoys in foreign states.

[2] The tricolour of the Carbonari, black, blue, and rose-colour.—*Colchester*, vol. iii. p. 150.

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rebels; the garrison of Naples deserted the royal cause; the regiments in the provinces imitated the example which had been set them at Nola; and the king, powerless from the defection of his army, made a virtue of necessity and promised to make known the bases of the Constitution within eight days.

The partial surrender of Ferdinand did not, however, satisfy the army. The chiefs of the revolt insisted on the immediate proclamation of the Spanish Constitution. It was said that there was no copy of this Constitution at Naples; neither the king, his ministers, nor any Neapolitan had ever seen it; but the force of the revolutionary movement was so strong that the king had to give way. Within one week of the first revolt at Nola, without any bloodshed, the king had been compelled to swear fidelity to the new order of things. In little more than a month a National Assembly completely reformed the institutions of Naples, and replaced the laws which had previously been in force with new statutes. These extraordinary events had been effected without bloodshed in Naples. But the revolution was not completed in Sicily without fighting. Sicily was ripe for revolt from a reason exactly opposite to that which influenced the Neapolitans. The Neapolitans were enraged at Ferdinand's presence among them; the inhabitants of Palermo were annoyed at the departure of the court. The news of the insurrection at Naples reached Palermo on the 14th of July. The populace on the following day rose, assaulted some forts, supplied themselves with the arms which they found in them, broke open the prisons, and liberated the prisoners. The troops endeavoured to restore order; but they were overpowered by the populace, and a provisional Junta was established to conduct the government. The Junta sent a deputation to Naples; but the Neapolitan Government declined to admit them into the town. Events at Palermo had gone so far that they threatened the sepa-

ration of Sicily and the violent disruption of the kingdom. General William Pepe possessed the chief authority among the army in Naples. His brother, Floristian Pepe, was sent with 4,000 men to control Palermo. Meeting with little resistance, he arrived before Palermo on the 25th of September. On the 5th of October the terms of capitulation were signed, and on the following day Pepe took possession of the town and proclaimed the Spanish Constitution.[1]

The consternation of the great powers at these revolutions.

These successive revolutions in Spain, Naples, and Portugal excited the most extraordinary consternation among the military empires of Europe. 'The events which have occurred in Spain,' wrote Count Hardenberg to Lord Castlereagh, 'are full of danger for the peace of Europe. The example of an army making a revolution is infinitely deplorable.'[2] But, deplorable as the conduct of the Spanish army must have appeared to autocrats, dependent for their authority on their own armies, the revolutions in Portugal and Italy were much more serious. In Portugal the entire army had declared for the Constitution. In Naples a kingdom had 'crumbled before a handful of insurgents that half a battalion of good soldiers might have crushed in an instant.'[3] It seemed impossible to foresee where the revolution might extend. The military monarchs of the Continent were not disposed to sit quietly by and watch the progress of a flood which might ultimately overwhelm themselves. Five years before, at Paris, they had bound themselves in a Holy Alliance to be governed by Christian principles in all their political transactions, with a view to perpetuating the peace

[1] An account of these events will be found in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Hist., pp. 238–242, and in the declaration by the Austrian Government, in *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1175–1181; a translation of this is in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1820, Chron., pp. 739–745. See also Lord Colchester's memoirs, vol. iii. pp. 148–217. Lord Colchester was staying at Naples at the time.

[2] 'Infiniment funeste.'—*Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xii. p. 224.

[3] Sir W. A'Court to Lord Castlereagh.—*Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xii. p. 279.

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which they had achieved. The peace which they had achieved was rudely threatened by insurrections which, in their eyes, were unnatural and unchristian; and the time seemed, therefore, to have arrived for concerting measures of protection against states which had placed themselves in an attitude of hostility against legitimate authority.[1] The military despots of the Continent were unanimous in their desire to check such proceedings as those which had occurred in the Two Sicilies. But the monarchs of Europe felt an unequal interest in these events. A revolution at Naples constituted a comparatively remote danger to the Emperor of Russia or the King of Prussia; but Austria was peculiarly sensitive to any popular commotion in Italy. The arrangements of 1815 had given her a large territorial interest, and had made 'the Emperor of Austria the natural guardian and protector of public tranquillity, in Italy.' The emperor was firmly resolved to fulfil this important duty, and was prepared to use force, if other means were inadequate, for the purpose. Prince Metternich, however, the Austrian minister, was too cautious a diplomatist to assume the entire responsibility of quelling the revolt. He was at considerable pains to explain the policy of his court to the minor German states; he laboured to form a common understanding with the great powers of Europe; he persuaded them all to imitate the example of his own master and to decline to receive an envoy from the Court of

[1] From the circular of the combined powers at Troppau. (*State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1150.) There is something very unsatisfactory about this document. Its language in the *State Papers* is much less forcible than its language in the *Castlereagh Correspondence*. For instance, in the *State Papers* the powers talk of their right *en concertant des mesures de sûreté*. In the *Castlereagh Correspondence* the words are *en se décidant de prendre des mesures de précaution et de répression*. The *State Papers* talk of a *renversement*; the *Castlereagh Papers* of a *bouleversement* of Government (*Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xii. p. 330). Could the despatch have been toned down for the British public before it was published? Other instances will be found later on in this chapter where the despatches published by the Foreign Office differ in a striking way from those which were actually written.

Naples; he invited the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia to meet the Emperor of Austria at Troppau for the purpose of arranging the measures which the crisis might require; and in the meanwhile he largely strengthened the force which Austria maintained in the northern provinces of Italy.[1]

The Congress at Troppau met at the end of October, 1820. The Emperors of Austria and Russia attended it in person. The King of Prussia, who was unwell, was represented by Count Hardenberg. Lord Castlereagh's brother, Lord Stewart, was present, but did not take any immediate part in the proceedings. The conference was short. The three powers were agreed in lamenting the revolutions which had occurred in Spain in March and in Naples in July, and 'the catastrophe in Portugal.' They were agreed in thinking that the revolution in Naples, which was daily taking deeper root, was causing greater danger to the tranquillity of the neighbouring states than the troubles in Spain and Portugal, and that it was capable of being more easily quelled. They were agreed in refusing to recognise a Government which had been the result of open revolt; and, before resorting to more extreme measures, they were agreed in inviting the King of Sicily to meet them at Laybach. They expressed a hope that France and England would not refuse to join in a proceeding which was in perfect harmony with the treaties to which they had already consented, and which promised to lead to the most pacific and equitable arrangements.[2]

The Congress at Troppau

adjourned to Laybach.

The King of France readily assented to the views of his brother potentates. The British Government, with

[1] See the circular of the Austrian Government to the German states. *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1130; the message of the King of Sicily, ibid., p. 1131; the despatch of the Sicilian Foreign Minister to the Austrian Government, ibid., p. 1135; and the report of the Sicilian Foreign Minister, ibid., p. 1141. The Courts of Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands alone recognised the Neapolitan Government.

[2] See the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian circular, *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1149.

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the dread of the British Parliament before it, refrained from committing itself in any way to the proposal. A British squadron was, however, stationed off Naples; instructions were given to the officer in command of it to protect the king from any danger, and a man-of-war was placed at his disposal to convey him on his way to Laybach.[1] The king himself was nervously anxious to escape from the difficulties of his situation. Ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of his nation, neither his advanced years nor the rigour of the season prevented him from accepting the invitation of the powers. He was prepared to promise that he would do his best to secure to his people the enjoyment of a Constitution which—so he declared—was as liberal as it was wise; and he left his son, the Duke of Calabria, whom he had already made his Vicar-General and *alter ego*, as Regent in his absence. The poor king probably imagined that these smooth sentences would reconcile his people to his absence. On the day after that on which he penned them the National Parliament told him that he could not go to Laybach except to defend the Constitution which he had deigned to acknowledge. The king, finding that the Parliament was firm, declared that he had never had any intention of violating the Constitution which he had sworn to maintain; and with this declaration he was permitted to proceed to Laybach.[2] On the 13th of December he embarked on board the 'Vengeur,' an English man-of-war. An untoward accident, which in another age would have been regarded as ominous, interrupted his journey at the outset. Crossing on opposite tacks, in a dark and squally night, the 'Vengeur' fouled the 'Revolutionnaire,' another English man-of-war; and both vessels, much disabled, were com-

[1] Lord Colchester says, on Sir W. A'Court's authority, that the man-of-war would have been at the king's disposal *if his departure was resisted* (vol. iii. p. 184). A very clear proof of the real views of the English Government.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1151–1160, 1179.

pelled to run for Baiæ.[1] The accident, however, did not cause any very serious delay. The 'Vengeur' was able to proceed to Leghorn on the 15th of December; and the unhappy old monarch, leaving the sea, proceeded by land to meet his powerful brother potentates at Laybach.

The King of Naples at Laybach.

The king on his arrival at Laybach found that it was utterly impossible for him to fulfil his promise to his Parliament. His Majesty was told that the allied sovereigns were resolved to abolish a Constitution which a faction with neither title nor power had imposed on the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies by the most criminal proceedings; that they regarded this Constitution as incompatible with the security of neighbouring states and with the peace of Europe; and that, if no other means were available for repealing it, they must have recourse to war. The king saw, or fancied that he saw, that it was hopeless to attempt to alter their resolution, and he was persuaded to write to the Regent to this effect, and to renounce the Constitution.[2]

The Austrian advance on Naples.

The king, in his letter to the Regent, did not apparently think it necessary to explain that he had renounced at Laybach the Constitution which, at Naples, he had sworn to maintain. His reticence on this point did not, however, produce much inconvenience. The king's letter to the Regent was followed by explanatory circulars to the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian ministers at Naples. The first of these circulars contained an elaborate history of the proceedings at Laybach, and directed the ministers to explain to the Regent the calamities which would inevitably follow should he refuse to obey the paternal voice of his king. The second of them explained that the temporary occupation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies by an armed force was judged indispensably necessary as a guarantee for the future.[3] The invasion of

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 188.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1163, 1172.

[3] *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1165–1179.

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Naples had, indeed, been already decided on. Throughout the autumn Austria had been steadily strengthening the forces which she maintained in her Italian provinces. Her army, at the commencement of February 1821, was instructed to advance.[1] His Imperial Majesty could not bring himself to suppose that any serious resistance would be made to the advance of this army. None but the public enemies to the state or the incurable partisans of a ruinous system could misconstrue the duty imposed on every loyal soldier and every patriotic citizen.

In one respect the Emperor of Austria judged accurately. His army met with no resistance which was worth the name. The most patriotic speeches were, indeed, made in the Neapolitan Cortes; the most patriotic laws were rapidly passed. The idea of submission was unanimously scouted, and resistance to the death was the watchword of every Neapolitan. Had the action of the Revolutionary Government been as valorous as their words, had their preparations been as complete as they appeared on paper, it is possible that the Austrian army might have met with unexpected difficulties. Acting at a great distance from the base of its operations, marching through a mountainous and inhospitable country, surrounded by a hostile and active population, its progress might have been impeded at every river which it crossed and at every pass through which it wound. The Neapolitans, however, mistook the bravery of words for the bravery of action. They talked of the levies which they had made and the levies which they had ordered; but these troops, if they ever existed except on paper, never reached the scene of active operations. Pepe, who had been the soul of the revolution, made a slight stand at Rieti on the 7th of March. After an indecisive skirmish his flank was turned, and he was compelled to retire. His men were not steady enough to conduct a retrograde move-

The Neapolitan defence collapses.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1180.

ment. They fell into confusion and dispersed among the mountains. The Neapolitans did not attempt any further resistance to the Austrian arms. Within a fortnight of the skirmish at Rieti a convention was signed between the Austrian and Sicilian armies at Capua. The war had been commenced with protests that death was preferable to concession. It had been concluded within the month by the most unqualified submission.[1]

Revolution in Piedmont,

Austria, however, had not stamped out the seeds of revolution in Italy by occupying the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Piedmont was nearly connected with Naples. The King of Piedmont was married to a daughter of the King of Naples; the Secret Society, which had its origin in the South, had its branches in the North of Italy. For some months past the Neapolitans had been hoping that an insurrection in Piedmont would make a seasonable diversion in their own favour. Revolutionary views had made progress among the Piedmontese troops; and there was reason to hope that the Sardinian army might imitate the example which had been set them by the soldiers in Naples.

For some months, however, nothing was done. On the 10th of March, three days after the Austrian victory of Rieti, a portion of the garrison at Alessandria raised the tricolour, occupied the citadel, and proclaimed the Spanish Constitution. On Monday, the 12th, some students and citizens succeeded in entering the cathedral at Turin, and, mingling with the garrison, raised the cry of *Viva la Constituzione di Spagna!* The populace, seeing that the citadel was forced, joined in the shout, and persuaded the Prince de Carignano to mediate between the king and his people. The prince complied; but the king, who was made of stouter stuff than his brother of the Two Sicilies, refused to give way. Powerless, however, to resist, on the following morning he abdicated his throne,

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 222–232. *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1192–1196.

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and proceeded to Nice. A provisional Junta was formed under the regency of the Prince de Carignano. But these events had hardly occurred before serious news reached the Piedmontese. The Neapolitan army were scattered like sheep at the approach of the Austrians; the allied sovereigns were still sitting in congress at Laybach; troops were being hurriedly collected on the frontier of Piedmont. The revolution had never taken the deep root in Piedmont which it had gained in Naples. The people saw the departure of their king with regret; they looked towards the august congress at Laybach with consternation. On the 8th of April, Count Bubna, the Austrian commander-in-chief, crossed the Ticino, and marched towards Vercelli. A brief and almost bloodless skirmish ensured him a victory. The provisional Junta was dissolved on the 9th of April. Count Bubna made his entrance into Alessandria on the 11th. The Austrians had gained an even easier victory in Piedmont than that which they had achieved in Naples. Revolution had been effectually crushed both in the north and in the south of the Italian peninsula; and armies of occupation, both in Piedmont and Naples, made any renewed attempts of a similar character impracticable.[1]

which is crushed.

The circular of the Allies from Laybach.

The allied sovereigns watched these events from the council-chamber at Laybach. The complete success of the Austrian troops, however, made the continuance of their council unnecessary. 'The legitimate authority had been 'restored; the factions' had 'been dispersed; the Neapolitan people' had been 'delivered from the tyranny of those impudent impostors who, deluding them with the dreams of false liberty,' had 'in reality inflicted upon them the most bitter vexations.' 'This important restoration had been completed by the counsels and the acts of the allied sovereigns. During the progress of

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 235-244.

these transactions the true character of 'that vast conspiracy which has so long existed against all established authority' had been revealed. 'The leaders of this impious league, indifferent as to what may result from the general destruction they meditate, aim merely at the fundamental bases of society. The allied sovereigns could not fail to perceive that there was only one barrier to oppose to this devastating torrent. To preserve what is legally established—such was, as it ought to be, the invariable principle of their policy. Useful or necessary changes in legislation and in the administration of states ought only to emanate from the free-will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God has rendered responsible for power. Penetrated with this eternal truth,' the sovereigns had met at Troppau, had adjourned to Laybach, and had crushed revolutions in Naples and in Piedmont. 'Penetrated with this eternal truth,' they communicated their sentiments to their representatives in every foreign court. 'Penetrated with this eternal truth,' they returned to their own dominions to apply the great principles on which they had agreed. But their separation was to be only temporary. They had still to determine the period during which it might be necessary to continue the enforced occupation of the countries which they had crushed into submission, and thus 'to consolidate the tranquillity of the Peninsula.' The same circular, therefore, which announced the close of the Congress stated that it would reassemble during the following year.[1]

Indignation in Britain at the circular of the allies.

The proceedings of the allied sovereigns at Troppau and Laybach had made the true object of the Holy Alliance manifest for the first time. It had for the first time been authoritatively declared that 'useful or neces-

[1] *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1199–1205. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Chron., pp. 599–605. The decision of the allied sovereigns has been given in the exact words of their memorable circular.

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sary changes in legislation and in the administration of states ought only to emanate from the free will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God had rendered responsible for power;' and the declaration had unfortunately been made by sovereigns who had both the will and the strength to apply it. No such prodigious blow had ever previously been struck at the struggling liberties of the civilised world. Nearly every useful or necessary change which had hitherto been made either in legislation or administration had been wrung from reluctant sovereigns by the perseverance of a determined people. The United Kingdom was the last country in Europe which could have consented to recognise the novel doctrine. Its whole history, from the days of the Great Charter to the defeat of the Government on the reform of the Criminal Laws, had been one eloquent protest against it. Unhappily, however, the people of this kingdom believed that the principle which the allied sovereigns had laid down was less distasteful to their ministers than to themselves. They thought that British ambassadors should not have been present either at Troppau or at Laybach; they thought that the British fleet should not have been stationed in the Bay of Naples while an Austrian army was marching southwards from the Po; and that the British Ministry should not have contented themselves with cold declarations of neutrality, but should have energetically protested against the interference of the allied sovereigns in the internal affairs of an independent and friendly kingdom.

Lord Castlereagh replies to it;

The language, indeed, which Lord Castlereagh held in public was tolerably satisfactory. The circular of the allied sovereigns from Troppau was issued on the 8th of December, 1820. Lord Castlereagh replied to it on the 19th of January, 1821. He 'should not have felt it necessary,' he began his reply by stating, 'to have made any communication to the British representatives at foreign

courts, 'had it not been for a circular communication addressed by the Courts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia to their several missions, which, if not adverted to, might convey very erroneous impressions of the past as well as of the present sentiments of the British Government.' It had become, therefore, necessary to state that the system of measures proposed by the allied powers was 'in direct repugnance to the fundamental laws' of the United Kingdom. 'But, even if this decisive objection did not exist, the British Government would, nevertheless, regard the principles on which these measures rest to be such as could not be safely admitted as a system of international law. Their adoption would inevitably sanction, and, in the hands of less beneficent monarchs, might hereafter lead to a much more frequent and extensive interference in the internal transactions of states than they are persuaded is intended. With respect to the particular case of Naples, the British Government did not hesitate to express their strong disapprobation of the mode and circumstances under which that revolution was understood to have been effected; but they, at the same time, expressly declared to the several allied courts that they should not consider themselves called upon or justified to advise an interference on the part of this country. They fully admitted, however, that other European states might feel themselves differently circumstanced; and they professed that it was not their purpose to interfere with the course which such states might think fit to adopt with a view to their security; provided only that they were ready to give every reasonable assurance that their views were not directed to purposes of aggrandisement subversive of the territorial system of Europe as established by the late treaties.'[1]

A mild protest of this character would not, under any circumstances, have stopped the march of the Austrian troops across the Po. But the country thought the

[1] *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1161.

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but his reply fails to satisfy the country,

protest, mild as it was, the least unsatisfactory feature in the conduct of the Ministry. It was observed that the British Ministry had waited for more than a month before they had thought it necessary to notice the circular of the allied powers; and that their reply had followed very closely on the unauthorised publication of an incorrect copy of the circular in a German newspaper.[1] It was inferred, therefore, that the protest would never have been made at all if it had not been for this circumstance. It was known, too, that the Neapolitans resented the presence of a British squadron at Naples, and that they had actually thought it necessary to demand an explanation on the subject.[2] The public was, in consequence, disturbed by grave suspicions and apprehensions; and there is, unfortunately, no doubt that they had good reasons for their uneasiness. Mild as was the protest which the Ministry publicly made against the circular of the allied powers, their private language directly encouraged the forcible occupation of Naples by the troops of Austria.

Lord Castlereagh was undoubtedly opposed to the joint action of Russia, Austria, and Prussia in Italy; but he was as certainly in favour of Austrian interference. 'I think,' he wrote to his brother, 'Metternich has essentially weakened his position by making it an European instead of an Austrian question.' 'We desire,' he wrote on another occasion, 'to leave Austria unembarrassed in her course; but we must claim for ourselves the same freedom of action. It is for the interest of Austria that such should be our position. It enables us in our Parliament to consider and consequently to respect her measures as the acts of an independent state—a doctrine which we could not maintain if we had rendered ourselves by a previous concert parties to those acts; and it places us in a situation to do justice in argument to the considerations

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 40. [2] *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1172.

which may influence her counsels, without, in doing so, being thrown upon the defence of our own conduct.'[1] It would have been difficult for a Foreign Secretary to have expressed more clearly his perfect approval of Austrian interference in Naples. But another member of the Cabinet went much further than Lord Castlereagh. The Duke of Wellington's influence on the Continent exceeded that of any other Englishman; and the Duke of Wellington, while the Austrian troops were marching upon Naples, thought it necessary to communicate his sentiments to the Austrian ambassador, 'in the capacity of an individual who was very much interested in the glory and in the happiness of the allied powers.' The Duke of Wellington had nothing to say against the Austrian occupation of Naples. He was merely disturbed by understanding that it was intended only to occupy it for three years. It ought, he thought, to have been stipulated that the occupation should last for seven years. It would, in that case, have been easy to have withdrawn the troops in three or five years; but, having once arranged for only a three years' occupation, it would be difficult to continue the occupation for five or seven years, however necessary such a continuance might prove.[2]

and is attacked in Parliament.

Fortunately for Lord Liverpool's Ministry, the private correspondence of Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington was not published till long after the Parlia-

[1] Lord Castlereagh to Lord Stewart, 16th of Sept., 1820, and of Jan., 1821.—*Castlereagh Cor.*, vol. xii. pp. 317, 341.

[2] Duke of Wellington to Prince Esterhazy (Wellington supplementary *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 160). Greville says, on the authority of Lord George Bentinck, that some of Lord Londonderry's 'letters were written expressly to throw dust in the eyes of Parliament.' This was his own expression to his brother, Lord Stewart, and in using it he added, 'You will understand this and know what to say to Metternich.' 'In fact, while obliged to pretend to disapprove of the Continental system of the Holy Alliance, he secretly gave Metternich every assurance of his private concurrence, and it was not till long after Mr. Canning's accession that Metternich could be persuaded of his sincerity in opposing their views, always fancying that he was obliged to act a part, as his predecessor had done, to keep the House of Commons quiet.'—*Greville*, vol. i. p. 105.

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ment of 1820 had been dissolved. The Opposition had nothing but the official despatches before it; and these despatches were not open to any very hostile criticism. The proceedings of the allied monarchs, indeed, provoked some very strong expressions from leading Liberals in both Houses of Parliament. An attempt was made, with some success, to show that the British Ministry had participated in the designs of the allies at Troppau. The circular from the allies had expressed a confident hope that England would join the other powers in proceedings which were declared to be 'in perfect harmony with the treaties to which she had already consented.' What were the treaties to which England had consented which could justify so confident an expression from the allied powers? Lord Castlereagh, in his reply, had himself declared that the system, on which the allies proposed to act, was 'in direct repugnance to the fundamental laws' of the United Kingdom. Was it possible that the Ministry had been either so weak or so careless as to become parties to a treaty either directly or indirectly repugnant to the fundamental laws of this country?

One subsidiary incident justified the apprehension that such might be the case. The allied monarchs had broken off all diplomatic negotiations with the revolutionary Government at Naples. The British Ministry had declined to receive Monsieur Cimitelli, the Neapolitan envoy to this country. How, it was asked, was it possible to justify a refusal to recognise the minister of a friendly power? The presence of the British fleet at Naples moreover was universally regarded as a direct menace to the Revolutionary Government. A letter to the Neapolitan Government from Sir W. A'Court, the British minister at Naples, was quoted to prove that the fleet was ready to interfere in the event of the royal family being exposed either to insult or danger. Such a threat, it was argued, might, under certain contingencies,

involve the bombardment of Naples by the British fleet. These and other matters, connected with the affairs of Italy, were over and over again discussed in Parliament during the Session of 1821. The Opposition again and again returned to the attack, but the Ministry were steadily supported by considerable majorities. A motion for explanatory papers was rejected in the House of Lords without a division, and in the House of Commons by a large majority.[1] In the subsequent debates the Ministry were always attended with a similar success.[2] Any other result would, indeed, have been impossible. The Opposition had only imperfect information at their disposal. They had the disadvantage of attacking a foregone conclusion. Nothing that Parliament could do could arrest the progress of the Austrian armies or inspire Pepe's miserable levies with military discipline. British influence in 1820 might possibly have had a salutary effect on the counsels of the allied monarchs. It was obvious in 1821 that the time for exerting it was over.

Attention is diverted from Italy to Portugal.

The march of the Austrian troops on Naples was, in fact, forgotten in the presence of a greater danger. It was known, at the beginning of May, that Russia was moving her troops towards her frontier; and an ominous rumour ran through Europe that she was contemplating interference in the affairs of Spain and Portugal. Lord Castlereagh was able to a certain extent to dispel this report. Russia, he assured the House of Commons, had only mobilised her army to support Austria in Italy; and the success of the Austrian arms had rendered mobilisation unnecessary and had arrested the westward march of the Russian troops.[3] Though, however, the march of the Russian army had been arrested, the apprehensions of a possible interference in Spain were not dispelled. The

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 742–795, 838–894. The majority was 194 votes to 125.

[2] For the debates see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. iv. pp. 1039, 1350, 1468; and vol. v. pp. 1222, 1254.

[3] Ibid., vol. v. p. 538.

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danger of intervention was, in fact, becoming continually greater. Constitutional government had been established both in Spain and Portugal; but the institution of constitutional government had not had the effect of preserving order. At the end of March 1821 the inhabitants of Lisbon resolved on a general illumination 'in celebration of the oath to the basis of the new Constitution.' The various foreign ministers in Lisbon agreed that the illumination was no affair of theirs, and declined, accordingly, to illuminate their houses. The populace displayed their displeasure by breaking the windows of the delegate of the Court of Rome. The Regency promptly apologised for 'so disagreeable an event;' and the affair was momentarily forgotten. Another illumination was, however, ordered for the 28th of April. Patrols were placed in front of all the foreign embassies. Through some mistake, however, the patrol in front of the Austrian embassy was withdrawn. 'The passing populace, irritated at seeing the house without lights,' broke the windows: and the Austrian ambassador, 'to avoid more serious insults,' allowed the embassy to be illuminated. The Austrian ambassador, however, immediately sent a special courier to Prince Metternich with an account of the transaction. Metternich concluded that a town which did not respect 'the inviolability' of an Austrian embassy was no fit place for the residence of an Austrian ambassador, and desired the envoy to insist on complete satisfaction, and on failing to receive it to demand his passports and to leave Lisbon. The Russian ambassador, following up the example of the Austrian envoy, suspended his functions and withdrew from the court; and Prussia refused to receive at Berlin the Portuguese chargé d'affaires.[1]

The Austrian and Russian ministers withdrawn from Lisbon.

The three allied monarchs had, therefore, suspended all diplomatic relations with Portugal; but they took no

[1] *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 772–788; and vol. ix. p. 858.

active measures towards intervention in that country. Geographical and political considerations made it impossible for them to do so. Geographically, Portugal was safe from an attack by land. Politically, she was closely allied with the only great European maritime power. However much the British Ministry might be opposed to the spread of revolutionary principles, it was hopeless to expect that any British minister would allow a foreign army to land on the shores of Portugal. The traditions of the Foreign Office and the feelings of the British nation would have compelled him to resist any intervention in the affairs of that kingdom. In Portugal, then, no immediate danger of foreign interference was to be apprehended. But the case of Spain was very different. It is fortunately unnecessary, in a history of England, to trace the obscure events which followed the institution of constitutional government in Spain. The violent proceedings of the Cortes naturally created a strong reaction. The priests, deprived of their property, exerted all their influence with the populace to injure the new Government. The people, eminently superstitious, and deprived of the alms which they had previously received from the priests, were easily persuaded to take part with their spiritual advisers. The nobility fancied that the confiscation of the property of the Church might eventually lead to the forfeiture of their own estates. The Cortes, in short, made enemies among every section of the Spanish nation. Disturbances, encouraged by the priests, broke out in the provinces; and organised bands of robbers infested the country and made peace and good government impracticable. Throughout the whole of 1821, and during the first six months of 1822, Spain was in a state of chronic disturbance. A king without power and without friends; a treasury without money; a Cortes without authority; a populace without order—such was the condition to

Reaction in Spain against the revolution of 1820.

Disturbances in Spain,

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which Spain had fallen—the same Spain which two centuries before had been universally regarded as the greatest empire in the world.

'The disturbances became gradually more serious during the first six months of 1822. The armies of the faith—as the absolutist forces in the North of Spain were styled—gradually swelled from guerilla bands into formidable armed bodies. In June they were able to seize the forts of Seo d'Urgel, and they followed up their success by installing a regular Regency. The unfortunate empire was now the seat of civil war; and both parties to the warfare fought in the same name. In the North of Spain the Regency of Urgel raised the standard for a 'captive' monarch, 'deprived of the means of promoting the good of his people, or of governing them according to the ancient laws, constitution, privileges, and customs of the Peninsula, dictated by a wise, free, and impartial Cortes.' The same monarch in Madrid was made to declare that the absolutists 'in vain invoke the name of a king, who only hears them with sentiments of the liveliest indignation; in vain pretend to defend the privileges of him who is ambitious of no other title than that of Constitutional Monarch of the Spains.'

which lead to civil war.

In the meanwhile the distracted country, torn by civil warfare, was exposed to a new danger. In the autumn of 1821 a terrible fever broke out in Eastern Spain. In Tortosa 7,000 persons died before the 26th of September, and the disease continued to carry off the population at the rate of seventy persons a day. At the end of September the mortality at Barcelona was at the frightful rate of 350 daily. Barcelona is situated at no great distance from the French frontier; and the Government of France was naturally alarmed at the proximity of the plague to their own borders. Five physicians, specially despatched from Paris, declared the fever to be contagious, and recommended that the district should be

The fever of 1821.

1821.

completely isolated. In accordance with their recommendation, the French Ministry drew a *cordon sanitaire* round the Spanish frontier. The plague gradually died away with the colder weather of the winter; but the French Ministry did not withdraw the troops who composed the *cordon sanitaire*. The force was gradually strengthened till it was raised into an army of observation comprising a hundred thousand men.

France establishes a *cordon sanitaire*, which is gradually developed into an army of observation.

An important change in the French Government was partly responsible for the continuance of this formidable force. The elections of 1819 had given the Liberal party a considerable influence in the French Chamber. Louis XVIII., seriously alarmed at the prospect, had made Monsieur Decazes minister, and had instructed him to prepare a radical alteration in the electoral law. The extreme Liberals, alarmed at the nature of this measure, had entered upon a violent opposition, and had recommended the most reprehensible proceedings as justifiable means for procuring their object. A deplorable event had emphasised their recommendations in an unfortunate manner. The Duc de Berri had been assassinated by Louvel at the Opera. The general horror at the catastrophe had produced a violent reaction in favour of the Royalists. Chateaubriand, the most brilliant of their writers, had openly declared that the ministers who had laboured in the cause of democracy shared the guilt of the assassin who struck the blow. Amidst the universal indignation thus occasioned the Ministry of M. Decazes fell, and was replaced by a moderate Administration under the Duc de Richelieu. Richelieu, however, proved too moderate for the absolutists, and was soon afterwards compelled to resign. Louis XVIII., completely under the influence of Monsieur, his brother, and his favourite, Madame du Cayla, made hardly an effort to avert the fall of his minister. A purely Royalist Ministry

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was formed, under M. de Villèle, the most distinguished member of the Royalist party.

M. de Villèle becomes minister.

A rapid succession of events in France had transferred the power of the State from the hands of moderate politicians to those of extreme Royalists. Extreme Royalists were certain to regard the proceedings of the Spanish Cortes as a greater danger to France than the Barcelona fever. Disturbances in Paris and the provinces gave some colour to the apprehensions in which they indulged. The Carbonari had their branches in France. Pepe and Riego found French imitators at Belfort, Thouars, and La Rochelle. The insurrections attempted at these places were easily put down; but they gave the Royalists an excuse for proceedings on which they could not otherwise have ventured. The arms of Austria had crushed out the insurrection in Piedmont. M. de Villèle's hundred thousand men vigilantly watched the far more serious disturbances across the Spanish frontier. Apprehensions had always existed of a French intervention in Spain. The success of Austria in Italy confirmed these fears, which the constant strengthening of the French armies in the south of France would alone have justified.[1]

In the west of Europe, then, France, under the temporary control of extreme Royalists, was jealously watching the progress of civil war in Spain. A still more formidable evil threatened the peace of eastern Europe.

The Ottoman Empire.

The once brilliant empire of the Ottoman Turks was apparently the victim of a slow and inevitable decay. Few things are more remarkable in the history of the world than the brilliant achievements of the House of Othman, the son of Ertoghul, the Right-hearted Man. For rather more than three hundred years no power in Europe seemed capable of withstanding the onslaught

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 170–206 and (1822) Hist., 231–256. *State Papers*, vol. ix. pp. 963, 1006. Alison, vol. ii. pp. 263–375, 533–564. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 146. Duke of Wellington's supplementary *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 288.

of the Ottoman race. Every successive ruler extended the boundaries of Ottoman rule. The whole of Asia Minor, the whole of Egypt, the whole of south-eastern Europe acknowledged the sovereignty of the Crescent. Solyman the Magnificent pushed his conquests to the walls of Vienna; and the chief bulwark of Christendom tottered before the attack of the Ottoman chivalry. The peril, however, was averted; the course of invasion was stayed; and, with the death of Solyman, the rising tide of Mussulman conquest began for the first time to recede. Solyman, who was the tenth of his race, was succeeded in 1566 by Selim the Sot; and, with the accession of Selim, the magnificent empire of the Ottomans showed symptoms of decay. But the decay was like the decay of the oak, whose death is almost as protracted as its life. None of the sultans who succeeded Solyman the Magnificent displayed the smallest capacity for rule. Their united reigns hardly occupied a third of the period during which their ten predecessors had governed Turkey. If Turkey had been left to the mercies of the race of Othman the Mahometan power must inevitably have been crushed. Fortunately, or unfortunately, however, the impotent sultans placed their destinies in the hands of competent advisers, and Turkey again passed through a short period of brilliant success. The sap rose to the dry branches of the dying tree; and Vienna, once more surrounded by the legions of the Crescent, owed her immunity from capture to the timely succour of a valiant Pole. The Crescent rolled back before the Cross, and was destined never to return. Hungary was recovered from the Mahometan; the southern boundaries of Poland were enlarged; and peace was finally concluded at Carlowitz between emperor and sultan in the last years of the seventeenth century.

Austria had hitherto been the hereditary enemy of Turkey. A much more formidable foe was, however,

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gradually rising into power in the North. The conquests of Ivan the Terrible had extended the boundaries of Russia to the Caucasus, and led to the first conflict between Russia and Turkey. Turkey found, as other nations subsequently discovered, that Russia was almost impregnable; but Russia, powerless in attack, was unable to retaliate on the invader. Russia, under Peter the Great, shared in the Austrian war which was terminated by the Peace of Carlowitz. She consented at Carlowitz to a two years' armistice. At the conclusion of the armistice she was, however, in no condition to renew the struggle. She was contending with Sweden for the empire of the North; and, until the defeat of Charles XII. at Pultowa, she had neither leisure nor means for renewing her contest with the Turks. Immediately after Pultowa, however, war again broke out. Peter the Great crossed the Pruth and marched down the banks of that river to the Danube. The Turks, gaining intelligence of his movements, blockaded the Russian army in an indefensible position; and a treaty, disastrous to Russia, alone saved the Czar the humiliation of capitulating with his entire army. For the first time in her history Russia had crossed the Pruth, and the passage had been followed by an almost irretrievable disaster. The disaster, however, did not diminish the desire of the Russian Government to extend the boundaries of their empire at the expense of the Ottomans. The war, which had been concluded on the Pruth in 1711, again broke out in 1736. In 1737 Austria joined with Russia in an alliance against the Turk. But the Imperial allies gained little from their alliance. Russia achieved some successes at a fearful cost of life and treasure. Austria, decisively defeated, was glad to sue for peace. The sap had again risen to the withered branches of the decaying tree. With a vigour which reminded Europe of her previous history Turkey had rolled back invasion from her borders, and was able to

Its first collision with Russia.

conclude a short and bloody war with the honourable Peace of Belgrade.

The Peace of Belgrade won for Turkey a respite of thirty years. From 1739 to 1768 she was at peace with Russia. In 1768 the war broke out which was ultimately terminated by the memorable Peace of Kainardji in 1774. The Peace of Kainardji gave Russia the important fortresses of Kertch and Yenikale, in the Crimea, the city of Azoph, and the castle of Kilburn. Turkey acknowledged that she received back from Russia the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, and that Russia had the right to interfere in the interests of the inhabitants of these provinces. Turkey promised to afford a constant protection to its Christian subjects; to erect a new Greek church in Constantinople; and to place it, and the ministers who officiated at it, under the specific protection of the Russian empire. This humiliating treaty, which gave Russia a distinct right to intervene in the internal affairs of Turkey, did not even secure the Porte twenty years of peace. In 1778, four years after the Peace of Kainardji, a second grandson was born to the Empress of Russia. The empress called the boy Constantine; she caused him to be instructed from his cradle in the Greek language, and openly designed him for an imperial throne at Constantinople. Long before the boy came of age Catherine extended the southern boundaries of her empire. In defiance of treaty she annexed the Crimea and the adjacent Tartar territory in 1783. The Porte, indignant at this act of robbery, was too weak to interfere. England, exhausted with the American war, was in no humour for embarking on a new struggle; and the Empress Catherine was enabled to carry out her policy of annexation. For four years after the annexation of the Crimea, Catherine almost openly continued her preparations for attacking Turkey. Irritated beyond the power of endurance, the Porte was goaded in 1787 into a declaration of

Its history from the Peace of Belgrade to the Peace of Jassy.

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war. The long war which ensued was again disastrous to the Mussulman power. The Russians had the advantage of Suwarrow's iron genius. For a short period they had the active assistance of Austria. By the Peace of Jassy, in 1792, the boundary of Russia was extended to the Dniester, and Russia was recognised as the Protector of the Caucasian Provinces of the Porte.

Its history and the Peace of Bucharest.

The Peace of Jassy was the natural corollary to the Peace of Kainardji. The next danger to which the Turkish Empire was exposed did not come from Russia. Napoleon, dreaming of Eastern conquest, embarked on his memorable campaign in Egypt, and carried his arms to Acre. Nelson and Sidney Smith compelled him to desist from his enterprise. But, though the enterprise had proved unsuccessful, the task of opposing it had increased the exhaustion of the decaying empire, which was apparently withering away. For the first time in history the Russian and the Turk had been fighting side by side against the French. The influence of Russia induced the Turks to concede a partial independence to the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, and to pledge themselves not to remove the reigning hospodars of those provinces without previous reference to St. Petersburg. Four years afterwards the neighbouring province of Servia acquired a similar independence under its intrepid leader, Kara George. Acting on the advice of France, the Porte, in 1806, deposed the reigning hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, and war, in consequence, again broke out between Russia and Turkey. The war, which was temporarily interrupted by the armistice of Slobosia in 1807, was finally concluded by the Peace of Bucharest in 1812. The boundaries of Russia were again advanced, and the Pruth was made the frontier between the two empires.

In 1812, when the Peace of Bucharest was signed, Mahmoud II. had been for four years Sultan of Turkey. When he commenced his reign his empire was exposed

to foreign war. Half its provinces were in insurrection, and no dependence could be placed on the Janissaries, the formidable body of men by whose valour the Ottoman Empire had in previous generations been sustained. Mehemet Ali had stamped out rebellion in Egypt by a horrible massacre of the Mamelukes; but Mehemet Ali by his victory had made himself almost independent of the Porte. Ali Pacha, obtaining the pachalic of Tricala, in Thessaly, had since acquired an independent territory in Albania, and stood at bay against the Sultan. The mighty empire of the Ottomans was apparently crumbling into fragments; and the Greeks, who had never tolerated their subjection, seized the opportunity for asserting their independence. A secret confederacy, the Hetæria, formed at the close of the preceding century, afforded them the means of organisation. Open warfare between the Porte and Ali Pacha gave them an opportunity. In 1821 Ipsilanti, a Greek by birth, but a Russian officer, crossed the Pruth into Moldavia and called on his countrymen to rise. Ipsilanti's proceedings were disavowed by the Emperor of Russia, and he himself was defeated at Dragaschan. But an insurrection contemporaneously broke out in every part of Greece. Candia refused tribute; the islands threw off the Turkish yoke; the inhabitants of the Morea took up arms; Greek vessels, manned by experienced sailors acquainted with every creek on the coast, eventually drove the Mussulman navy from the Archipelago. Bands of Greek insurgents, spreading through the country, surrounded the small forces which Turkey had stationed in the Morea, and compelled some of the places which were garrisoned by the Ottomans to capitulate.[1]

The War of Greek Independence was characterised

[1] In the previous account of Turkey I have mainly followed Sir E. Creasy's interesting history of the Ottoman Turks. The account of the Greek insurrection will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., pp. 245–257.

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from the very outset by the most brutal outrages. The Greek had no pity for the Turk; and the Turk avenged himself with merciless ferocity on the Greek. Suspicion fell even on those Greeks who were not in arms; the Greek churches in Constantinople were demolished; and the venerable Patriarch of the Greek Church was hanged. The superiority of the Greeks at sea threatened to deprive Constantinople of its supply of corn from the Mediterranean, and orders were issued to prevent the exportation of grain from the Dardanelles. These proceedings on the part of Turkey were little short of a direct challenge to Russia; the stoppage of the traffic of the Dardanelles annihilated the grain trade of Odessa; the execution of the Greek Patriarch was a violation of the Treaty of Kainardji. Russian merchants affected to believe that their lives and property were insecure. The Russian ambassador, Baron Strogonoff, formally remonstrated. Acting on express instructions from St. Petersburg, he demanded, on the 18th of July, 1821, that the churches which had been destroyed or plundered should be immediately restored; that the Christian religion should be guaranteed against future outrage; that a distinction should be drawn between the innocent and the guilty; that the Greeks, on the faith of it, should be invited to submit within a given time; that the Russian Government should, in the spirit of the Treaties of Kainardji and Bucharest, be a party to the pacification of Wallachia and Moldavia; and that a reply should be given to these demands within eight days.[1] No reply came within the specified period, and Strogonoff immediately demanded his passports and left for Odessa.[2] War, however, did not immediately ensue. The Czar had hitherto been alternately swayed by the rival counsels of two of his ministers, Count Capo d'Istrias and Count Nesselrode.

Russia presents an ultimatum.

The Russian Ambassador withdraws from Constantinople.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. viii. pp. 1251–1257.

[1] Ibid., vol. viii. p. 1258. *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 252.

Capo d'Istrias had persuaded himself that immediate war was desirable. Nesselrode was at the head of the party which desired peace. For a time it seemed impossible to predict whether the war party or the peace party would prevail with the Czar. Strogonoff returned. War seemed imminent; and the Czar suddenly resolved on a policy of peace. Capo d'Istrias was dismissed; Nesselrode was taken into closer confidence than ever; and the other Christian embassies at Constantinople were invited to induce the Porte to comply with the demands of Russia.[1]

The policy of the Czar.

The Czar had shrunk from the responsibility of declaring war. He had done so because a war for the liberation of Greece would have been inconsistent with the policy which he was pursuing in every other part of Europe. Alexander was the soul of the Holy Alliance. The principle which the members of the Alliance had just laid down was, that 'useful or necessary changes in legislation, and in the administration of states, ought only to emanate from the free will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God has made responsible for power.' Tried by this principle, the Greek insurrection was as indefensible as the revolutions in Spain, Portugal, and Italy. The mission of the Czar was to preserve legitimate authority, and Alexander could not persuade himself to strike a blow at the legitimate authority of even his hereditary foe. The nervous apprehensions of the emperor were, moreover, encouraged by the British Foreign Office. Castlereagh was anxious to prevent the intervention of Russia in Turkey, and he thought that his best chance of doing so lay in confounding insurrection with revolution. An English Radical, a Sicilian rebel, or a Spanish Constitutionalist should, in his judgment, be all included in the same category. He was incapable of distinguishing between the Hetæria of Greece,

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 190.

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the Carbonari of Naples, the Comuneros of Spain, and the Radicals of England. The events in Turkey, he wrote to the Czar, 'form a branch of that organised spirit of insurrection which is systematically propagating itself throughout Europe, and which explodes whenever the hand of the governing power, from whatever cause, is enfeebled.' 'With all deference,' he added in an explanatory letter to the British minister at St. Petersburg, 'the Emperor of Russia ought to disavow the Greek cause, as one essentially revolutionary.'[1]

Castlereagh's letter was dated the 16th of July, 1821. On the 18th of July Strogonoff presented his ultimatum to the Porte. Before the conclusion of the month he was waiting a favourable wind to carry him to Odessa. The Czar, alternately meditating on peace and war, received the counsels of the British minister before he learned the abrupt departure of his ambassador. Peaceful counsels for the time prevailed, and a slow negotiation was commenced. The Porte, on its part, was desirous of gaining time; and the Czar, resolved on peace, was unable to push matters to a rapid issue. Time was, in fact, on the side of the Porte. A war commenced by some Persian princes threatened the loss of its Asiatic provinces.[2] The Shah disavowed the proceedings of his subjects, and relieved the Porte from its apprehensions in that quarter. Ali Pacha, the lion-hearted rebel of Janina, driven to his last fortress, was defeated and slain in January 1822.[3] In July of the same year the Porte consented to remove one cause of difference between Russia and itself by appointing two Christians to the government of Wallachia and Moldavia.[4] The seasonable delay had improved the position of the Porte in all these matters. In Greece, however, and in the Greek islands, the efforts of the

The policy of the Porte.

[1] *Castlereagh Corresp.*, vol. xii. pp. 404, 445.
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 256.
[3] Ibid., 1822, Hist., p. 271.
[4] Ibid., p. 276.

Ottomans were powerless to crush the rebellion. The Greeks maintained an ascendancy at sea, and declared any Greek port in the occupation of the enemy in a state of blockade,[1] and the Porte was compelled by this bold challenge to take active measures for asserting its authority.

Massacre of Scio.

The little island of Scio, the ancient Chios, lies near the shore of Asia Minor. It was, therefore, remote from the sway of the provisional Government of Greece; it was open to an attack from the Asiatic territories of the Porte. More than twenty-two centuries before Chios had been exposed to the desolating anger of the Athenians, and had been punished for its fidelity to Sparta by the devastation of its fields and the massacre of its inhabitants. Richer than any other island in the Archipelago, it was long before Scio took any part in the Greek insurrection. In March 1822 a small band of insurgents landed on its shores, and the whole island rose at once in insurrection against the Turks. The Turkish commander, unable to make head against the insurgents, shut himself up in the castle and waited for reinforcements, which arrived on the 11th of April. The arrival of reinforcements was immediately followed by the complete defeat of the insurgents. The defeat of the insurgents was the signal for the most horrible massacre which has disgraced the annals of the present century. For ten days the entire island was given over to fire and to the sword. Every building was destroyed, everything found alive was killed, except the younger women and children, who were reserved for a worse fate. The angel of death hovered over the island while anything remained to die; the work of destruction was not suspended till nothing was left to destroy. A few hundred miserable persons, the solitary remnant of one hundred and twenty thousand people,

[1] The proclamation will be found in *State Papers*, vol. ix. p. 798.

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were left to bewail the extermination of their race and to marvel at their own survival.[1]

The Greeks' revenge.

The British minister formally remonstrated against this horrible outrage. The Greeks, mistrusting remonstrance, retaliated with effect on its authors. Two fireships silently floated in the middle of the night towards the Turkish squadron stationed off Scio. One of them, grappling with the flagship of the Turkish admiral, was with difficulty sunk. The other, attaching herself while the Turk was occupied with her comrade, bound herself to the admiral's vessel, and was soon involved with it in a common conflagration. The flames took effect with terrible consequences. The fire spreading to the magazine, the ship exploded, and 2,000 of her crew were in a moment destroyed. So fatal a catastrophe had perhaps never previously been recorded in the annals of maritime warfare.

The Congress of Vienna.

Such were the leading episodes in the War of Independence in the summer of 1822. The summer of 1822 had been always designed for the reassembling of the sovereigns who had temporarily separated at Laybach. The monarchs, who had decided on the occupation of Naples and Piedmont, had to determine whether the time had arrived at which the Austrian troops could be safely withdrawn. Russia was desirous of bringing before the Congress the position of Greece. The state of Spain required consideration, and the relations of Spain to her colonies were creating anxiety. The British Government imagined that these points would be the principal topics discussed at the Conference. It selected as its representative the remarkable statesman who for ten years had guided the foreign policy of his country. Castlereagh

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1821, Hist., p. 274. Alison says that 25,000 persons were killed, 45,000 sold into slavery, and that 15,000 escaped (vol. iii. p. 140). Codrington, who visited the island shortly after the massacre, says that the population before the massacre was 120,000 of whom 30,000 were killed and 80,000 sold or exiled.—Vol. i. pp. 390, 395.

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was preparing to set out for Vienna, where the Congress was to assemble, when he was seized with the fatal illness which terminated his career. He died by his own hand;[1] and, for one of the most eventful months in the history of Europe, George was being 'fiddled unto by Sawney' in Scotland, and England was without a Foreign Minister. Though, however, Castlereagh's place at the Foreign Office was left unfilled, the Duke of Wellington was at once appointed to represent the country at the Congress. Wellington was preparing for his journey when he was himself seized with a severe illness. The Emperor of Russia arrived at Vienna on the 9th of September; the English envoy only reached Paris on his road thither on the 20th. The Turkish question had been practically settled, and the Congress had adjourned to Verona, to adjudicate on the affairs of Italy, before the duke was able to join the council. His delay had been attended with one advantage. Before he left England Canning had accepted the seals of the Foreign Office; the duke himself having been instrumental in overcoming the king's repugnance to this appointment.

The Duke of Wellington sent to Verona.

The instructions to the duke had been drawn up before Canning's acceptance of office. The British envoy was desired, in passing through Paris, to endeavour to arrive at some distinct understanding with the French Government upon the Spanish question.[2] The duke accordingly called on M. de Villèle, and learned with some surprise and alarm that a section of the French Cabinet were of opinion that they ought to proceed at once to attack the Spaniards and to rescue the King of Spain. The French, Wellington thought, had assembled their army in a hurry; they were afraid to advance, and they were ashamed to

His instructions.

The views of France.

[1] 'Lord Londonderry s'étoit coupé la gorge à Londres, et nous, nous partions pour Vérone,' wrote Chateaubriand with the cynical conciseness which enlivens every page of the *Congrès de Vérone*.—Chateaubriand's *Works*, vol. xii. p. 33.

[2] The instructions will be found in Wellington supplementary *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 284.

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retire; and they wished, if they entered Spain at all, for a covering authority from the allied powers at Verona. Wellington's report of his conversation with de Villèle was the first intimation which the English Cabinet had received of the prominence the Spanish question would receive at the Congress. But another fact almost immediately afterwards threw fresh significance on the duke's report. Sir W. A'Court had just been appointed British minister at Madrid, in succession to Mr. Hervey, whose health had required his retirement. Sir W. A'Court, who had been minister at Naples, held a high position in the diplomatic service. He departed somewhat hastily for his new post, and the four great Continental powers ventured on remonstrating with the British Government on Sir William's 'precipitate departure.' Sir William's arrival, it was urged, would encourage the disaffected, and would lend colour to the reports, which were already prevalent, of disunion amongst the allies. Canning at once saw, 'from the combined movement on the part of the four missions, that some joint public declaration on the affairs of Spain' was 'in the contemplation of the allied sovereigns.' It therefore became his duty not merely to put the Duke of Wellington on his guard, but to direct him to resist any proposal for intervention in Spain. If the allies entertained, he wrote, 'a determined project of interference by force, or by menace, in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his Majesty's Government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference—so objectionable does it appear to them in principle, and so utterly impracticable in execution—that, if the necessity should arise, or (I would rather say) if the opportunity should offer, I am to instruct your Grace at once frankly and peremptorily to declare that to any such interference, come what may, his Majesty will not be a party.' [1]

The views of Canning.

[1] *Despatches* of Duke of Wellington, vol. i. p. 304. Extracts from these despatches will be found, in the shape in which they were published at the

The duke left Paris on the 23rd of September, and he reached Vienna on the 29th. On his way through Munich he received a letter from Metternich announcing the adjournment of the Congress to Verona. The sovereigns did not intend to arrive at Verona before the 16th of October,[1] and the duke had, therefore, a fortnight's leisure to acquaint himself with the views of the other powers on the Spanish question. He discovered that Austria desired to leave the Spaniards to themselves. Metternich, indeed, would have liked to have overturned constitutional government in Spain, and to have re-established the absolute authority of Ferdinand. But he was shrewd enough to see the danger and the difficulty inseparable from the attempt, and he shrank from the risk which the enterprise would involve.[2] Russia, on the other hand, regarded Spain 'as the head-quarters of revolution and Jacobinism.' 'So long as the revolution in that country should be allowed to continue, every country in Europe, and France in particular, was,' in the judgment of the Czar; 'unsafe.' The Czar, however, 'felt no confidence either in the loyalty or the military qualities of the French army;' and he hinted that his own troops might be placed at the disposal of the alliance for the purpose of overturning the Spanish Government.

The views of Austria and Russia.

These preliminary conversations occupied the duke's time at Vienna. From Vienna he proceeded by easy stages to Verona. Many people are now well acquainted with the old Roman town on the Adige, whose antiquities, whose history, whose situation, and whose associations tempt them to break their journey to Venice. But those who now visit the quiet town can have little idea of the bustle and gaiety which it witnessed in the autumn of

Wellington reaches Verona.

time, in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 904, and *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 4. These extracts are worse than useless: they withhold so much information as to be absolutely misleading.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. pp. 319, 322.

[2] Ibid., p. 343.

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1822. In that dull, quiet town were collected the rank, the beauty, and the genius of Europe. The Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, the ex-Empress of the French were all present in the city. Metternich was there to watch the interests of Austria; Nesselrode to advise his autocratic master. Montmorency, who held the seals of the French Foreign Office, was assisted by Chateaubriand, the brilliant author of the 'History of the Congress.' In Wellington this country had a representative whose abilities and whose achievements had raised him above all his contemporaries. The duke, on his arrival at Verona, found that the great Continental powers had already modified their views. 'All notion of what is called an European army, or any offensive operation against Spain,' he wrote on the 18th of October, 'is at an end, and we are to meet to-morrow or next day to see what the French ministers have to say to us on that subject.' [1]

A confidential meeting of the representatives of the five powers took place two days afterwards. Montmorency read a paper, reviewing the course of events in France and Spain since the revolution of 1820, and concluded by handing in another paper for the consideration of the Congress. The second paper asked the allies to say whether, if France found it necessary to recall her minister from Madrid, the other courts would adopt the same measure? Whether, if war broke out between France and Spain, the other powers would extend to France their moral support? And finally whether, in the case of France desiring their active interference, they would afford her effective assistance? [2] The Czar at once declared his readiness 'to consent to all the demands of the French ministers,' to march an army of one hundred

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 384.

[2] Ibid., vol. i. pp. 404, 409. *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 5. *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 905. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 149.

and fifty thousand men through Germany into Piedmont, 'to fall upon France—if the Jacobin party in France should take advantage of the absence of the army, or its possible disaster in Spain, to make any attempt upon the Government—or upon Spain, if the French Government should require its assistance.'[1] Montmorency was, for the moment, disposed to close with the Czar's offer. Wellington, however, pointed out to him the extreme danger which would arise to France from the presence of a large Russian army on her southern frontier. Metternich, alarmed at the possible consequences of 150,000 Russian soldiers in Italy, backed up the Duke of Wellington; and Montmorency was at last persuaded 'to oppose the movement of any troops by any of the allies till they shall be positively called for by France.'[2]

Britain dissents from the policy of the other powers

The danger of Russian intervention was removed; but the possibility of French interference in Spain was not decreased. On the contrary, the Continental powers undertook on their part to withdraw their ministers from Madrid, should the French Government find it necessary to recall its own; they promised 'to give to France every countenance and assistance she should require;' and they agreed that the ministers of each of the four Continental courts 'at Madrid should present a separate note of the same tenour, and drawn upon the same principles.'[3] This determination, on the part of the allies, at once brought out in strong relief the distinction between the policy of England and that of the other Continental powers. The announcement that the Continental powers would remonstrate with Spain elicited a firm declaration from Wellington. The duke declared that 'his Government must decline 'to hold a common language with his allies upon this occasion;' and he went on to say that the British Government would direct its 'minister at Madrid to allay the

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 457. [2] Ibid., p. 458.
[3] Ibid., p. 519.

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ferment which the communications of the allies must cause.'[1]

The alteration in the foreign policy of Britain.

The alteration in the policy of the British Government was now apparent. At Laybach it had officially protested against the interference of the allies in the affairs of Naples; but it had privately expressed its sympathy with Austria. At Verona, Metternich hoped that it would have continued the same policy.[2] He found, to his intense annoyance, that the British Government was not only determined to lend no indirect aid to the Continental powers, but that it had also decided to counteract, as far as possible, the impression which their remonstrances might make at Madrid. Further deliberations with the Duke of Wellington on the Spanish question became impossible. The Continental powers, in future, discussed the matter alone; and they agreed at one of their conferences on a treaty—which they called a *procès verbal*—defining the conditions on which France should be entitled to their succour against Spain. But, though the Continental powers were able to embody their joint views on the subject in a common document, every discussion brought out more sharply the differences among them. Russia, or the Emperor of Russia, was bent upon war, for the double object of employing his own troops and of stamping out a revolution which he considered 'inconsistent with the happiness of Spain and the safety of every other country in Europe.'[3] Austria, on the contrary, or rather Metternich, her minister, swung like a pendulum from one extreme to the other; full of apprehensions, at one moment, of the presence of a Russian army in Piedmont; full of anxiety at another to please and satisfy the Russian emperor.[4] Prussia adopted the shifting sentiments of the Austrian minister, and concealed

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 559.

[2] See a remarkable memorandum of Charles, Lord Londonderry, in ibid., p. 510.

[3] Ibid., pp. 520, 555.

[4] Ibid., p. 564.

her secret anxiety for peace by the exceptional vigour of her remonstrances.[1] No real agreement, then, existed between the great Continental potentates; and the words which they employed, instead of ratifying a common purpose, were used to conceal their numerous differences.

The policy of France.

The sentiments of the French Cabinet were as various as those of the other allies. De Villèle, the head of the Ministry, was bent on regarding the Spanish question as exclusively French, and on finding some tolerable pretext for a pacific solution of it. Montmorency, the head of the Foreign Office and the French representative at Verona, persisted in regarding it as exclusively European, and hardly attempted to conceal his anxiety for war. Chateaubriand steered a middle course between the rival views of the two ministers, and argued that the question of Spain was partly French and partly European. He was, however, at least as anxious for war as his colleague at Verona. The sharp divergence between the views of de Villèle and those of Montmorency became immediately visible after the conclusion of the conference. De Villèle hurriedly sent a minister to Verona begging the Continental sovereigns to suspend the transmission to Madrid of the despatches which had been the chief result of their long conferences on Spain.[2] Montmorency, on the contrary, had pledged himself to supplement these despatches with a similar remonstrance from the French Government. The allied sovereigns declined to comply with de Villèle's request, and to postpone the transmission of their despatches to Madrid. The despatches were sent; and, as no favourable answer was returned to them, Russia, Austria, and Prussia withdrew their ministers from the Spanish Court. Montmorency, full of the pledges which he had given at Verona, desired that France should follow the example of the allied potentates. De Villèle, bent on regarding the Spanish question as French,

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 566. [2] Ibid., p. 633.

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was determined to separate himself from the other allied powers. Foiled in his favourite policy, Montmorency resigned his office; and Chateaubriand, who had adroitly trimmed his course between the European policy of one of his superiors and the French policy of the other, was appointed his successor.[1]

Canning offers to mediate between France and Spain.

Before the resignation of Montmorency, Canning had made one more effort to secure the peaceful solution of the Spanish question. Wellington was returning through Paris from Verona; and he was desired to offer the services of the British Government to mediate between Spain and France. The offer was declined. But in declining it Louis XVIII. told the duke 'that the best thing the British Government could do would be to endeavour to prevail upon the Spaniards to modify their system in such a manner as to give the King of Spain some security for the safety of his person and more authority, and to the system itself more stability.'[2] The casual remark which Louis XVIII. thus made suggested the possibility of one more effort for the conclusion of peace. Wellington held an exceptional position in Europe. He was a grandee of Spain; he was the owner of a large Spanish property; he was, in some respects, a Spaniard by adoption; and he had many intimate friends in the Spanish Government. The British Ministry thought that, under these circumstances, the Spanish Government might be induced to regard with exceptional favour any counsels which emanated from the Duke of Wellington. For a moment they actually contemplated sending him on a special mission to Madrid.[3] But the objections to this proposal were so grave that it was ultimately abandoned. Instead of sending the duke himself, they decided to entrust Lord Fitzroy Somerset, one of his intimate friends, with a

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. pp. 225–229.

[2] Ibid., p. 224. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 645.

[3] Ibid., pp. 7, 46, 63.

special mission to Madrid from the duke.[1] 'Lord Fitzroy Somerset was desired to urge on the Spanish Government the importance of giving the King of Spain the power of executing his office.' There were grounds for hoping that Spain might be ready to receive this suggestion with favour. 'Spaniards of all parties and descriptions admitted some modifications of the Constitution of 1812 to be indispensably necessary;' and it, therefore, seemed possible to obtain these modifications at a time when their success would promote the internal prosperity of the country and avert the prospect of foreign war.

Somerset's mission might possibly have proved successful if it had not been for an untoward circumstance. Soon after his arrival, news reached Madrid of the opening of the French Chambers. On the day on which they were opened the public first learned that Louis XVIII. had withdrawn his minister from Madrid. 'The infatuation with which the representations made at Madrid have been rejected leaves little hope of preserving peace,'—so ran the speech of Louis XVIII.,—'I have ordered the recall of my minister. One hundred thousand Frenchmen, commanded by a prince of my family, by him whom my heart delights to call my son, are ready to march, invoking the God of St. Louis to preserve the throne of Spain for a descendant of Henry IV., to save this beautiful kingdom from its ruin, and to reconcile it with Europe. If war is inevitable, I will use my utmost efforts to confine its area and to limit its duration. It shall only be undertaken to conquer the peace which the State of Spain would make impossible. Let Ferdinand VII. be free to give to his people the institutions which they cannot hold except from him. From that moment hostilities shall cease.'[2]

Louis XVIII.'s speech on opening the Chambers.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 32, and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 1. The editor of the *State Papers* has suppressed, as usual, the strong passages in the duke's letter.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 758.

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Louis XVIII. had made war inevitable. He had, in fact, repeated the famous declaration of the Continental potentates at Laybach. 'Useful or necessary changes in legislation and in the administration of states,' wrote the allied monarchs at Laybach, 'ought only to emanate from the free will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God had rendered responsible for power.' 'Let Ferdinand be free to give to his people the institutions which they cannot hold except from him,' was the declaration of Louis XVIII. Lord Castlereagh had waited from the 8th of December, 1820, to the 19th of January, 1821, before he published a timid rejoinder to the declaration of the allied monarchs. Canning, on the contrary, waited 'not a week, not even a day,' to tell France that no British statesman could 'uphold or defend' the policy which Louis XVIII. announced. 'If that speech were to be understood,' said Canning in the House of Commons, 'as the plain meaning of the words in which it was couched naturally suggested, no British statesman who valued his character as a member of a free state could either think or hear of his country being made a party to negotiations for the purpose of discussing such monstrous proposals.'[1] Canning's vigorous remonstrance had not the effect of preserving peace; but it induced the French Government to explain away the phrase and to adopt another construction of it, which Canning 'was free to confess the words were not altogether qualified to bear.' The negotiations, in consequence, were permitted to proceed; but the prospects of success 'became gradually fainter, and at last vanished altogether.' On the 23rd of March the Spanish Cortes were closed, and the members of it followed the king, who had preceded them three days before, to Seville. On the 7th of April the Duc d'Angoulême crossed the Bidassoa. The Spanish War had begun.

Canning remonstrates.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 885.

The conduct of France towards Spain excited the greatest possible consternation in this country. Spain had been the theatre of the greatest triumphs of the British army; the defence of Spain against France had been the greatest achievement of the British general. The revolution in Spain had been regarded with favour by the Liberal party in England; and the future of liberty in Europe seemed partially dependent on its success. Constitutional government had been stamped out in almost every Continental country. Constitutional government hardly existed on the Continent, except in the Spanish peninsula. The friends of freedom might be pardoned for overlooking the excesses which the Constitutionalists had committed in Spain; the patriots might be pardoned for thinking that the sacrifices which England had made in the Peninsula would be useless if Spain were once more to be occupied by a French army. A portion of the population desired to regard the passage of the Bidassoa as a declaration of war against England, and were disposed to censure the Ministry for the moderation of their conduct. Addresses censuring the Ministry were moved on the 24th of April in the House of Lords, and on the 28th of April in the House of Commons. Both of them were rejected by large majorities. Any other result was, in fact, impracticable. There were only two grounds on which it was possible to attack the policy of the Ministry. Exception might be taken to their conduct of the negotiations, or objection might be raised to their neutrality in the war. Lord Grey boldly contended that Great Britain ought to have used language in the Conference which might have resulted in war. Mackintosh insisted that no war could be more justifiable than one undertaken to preserve the balance of power in Europe. A minority of the Legislature supported the views which were thus expressed; but the majority were hopelessly in favour of a policy of neutrality, and deter-

The Spanish War provokes a strong feeling in Britain.

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mined to support the Ministry in its resolution to preserve the country from war.[1]

Attack upon the Government.

This general agreement necessarily weakened the case of the Opposition. If it were once determined that this country ought to abstain from embarking on a new war with France, one-half of the case against the Ministry broke down. All that the Opposition, in that case, could do was to impugn the conduct of the negotiations at Verona, at Paris, and at Madrid. The Opposition did this. They complained that the language used by Wellington at Verona was tame and insufficient, and that he should have been instructed to adopt a tone of firm remonstrance; they complained that the Ministry had been duped by France in the negotiations at Paris; and that they had no right to affront the Spaniards by proposing to them to modify their constitution at the pleasure of France. The first of these criticisms was open to a crushing reply from Canning. The best test of the conduct of the negotiations was their success; and the negotiations at Verona had been essentially successful. The object of the allies at Verona was to concert a general war against Spain; the attitude of England had defeated their intentions. 'The immediate object of England,' said Canning, 'was to hinder the impress of a joint character from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the Congress; and this I say was accomplished.'[2] The second criticism, from its very nature, was less easily disposed of. It was open to anyone to say that England had been duped by France; and the course of events undoubtedly afforded some pretext for the imputation. Canning could only reply that he still believed that the French Government hoped to avert the war, and that they had been forced into it 'by the vio-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 1175, 1231, 1253, 1407, 1548.
[2] Ibid., p. 1483.

lence of a political party in France. . . . 'We, forsooth, are condemned as dupes, because our opponents gratuitously ascribe to France one settled, systematic, and invariable line of policy,' while the French Ministry had constantly changed its ground. 'And this,' said Canning, 'brings me to the point on which the longest and fiercest battle has been waged against us—the suggestion to Spain of the expediency of altering her constitution. It is said that everything was required of Spain and nothing of France. I utterly deny it. France said to Spain, "Your revolution disquiets me;" and Spain replied to France, "Your army of observation disquiets me." There were but two remedies for this state of things, war or concession. Nothing but some modification of the Spanish constitution could avert the calamity of war. Considering its immediate practical advantage to Spain, the withdrawal of the Army of Occupation would not have been too dearly purchased by such an alteration.'[1]

The progress of the war.

Canning's speech effectually disposed of the attack of the Opposition. The speech was received with unqualified admiration, both by the audience to which it was addressed and the country at large.[2] In the meanwhile the Duc d'Angoulême was steadily advancing into the heart of Spain. Those who recollected the fierce struggle which Spain had maintained against the French Empire only fifteen years before anticipated that the path of the Duc d'Angoulême would be full of danger and difficulty. The French army, however, met with hardly more resistance than the Austrians in 1821 had encountered in Naples. Mina, the ablest of the Spanish generals, maintained himself, indeed, in Catalonia against the left wing of the French army; but the duke's own progress was only interrupted by some obscure skirmishes. On the 7th of April he crossed the Bidassoa; he remained for about

[1] Compressed from the speech in *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 1478–1527.
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, p. 45.

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a month at Vittoria; on the 10th of May he arrived at Burgos; on the 23rd of May the rear of the French army entered Madrid. At the first threat of French invasion the King of Spain had been removed from Madrid to Seville. The advance of the French troops made the Cortes insist on his further removal to Cadiz. The French had no alternative but to follow the king. D'Angoulême did not allow the grass to grow under the feet of his battalions. He pushed them forward with such vigour that on the 13th of June they were at Cordova; in the middle of July the siege of Cadiz had commenced. All the zeal of two Englishmen, Lord Nugent and Sir Robert Wilson, who hurried to the rescue, could not avert the fall of the fortress.[1] On the 31st of August the great fortress of the Trocadéro was taken by assault; and on the 3rd of October Cadiz capitulated.[2]

Few wars were ever less justifiable than those which were undertaken by Austria against Naples in 1821, and by France against Spain in 1823. Utterly unjustifiable as they were, however, few wars had ever been attended with a more decisive success. The invasion of Naples had involved little more than a military parade. The French army had marched from one end of Spain to the other in less than six months. The resistance of Spain had collapsed, because the Spaniards were sick of the cause for which they were nominally fighting. The Constitutionalists had offended the pride and prejudices of their

[1] 'Lord Nugent's conduct,' said Canning, alluding to his lordship's size (he was very stout), 'was a most enormous breach of neutrality.' 'It was about the middle of last July that the heavy Falmouth coach was observed to proceed to its destination with more than its wonted gravity. The coach contained two passengers —the one a fair lady, of considerable dimensions; the other a gentleman, who was about to carry the succour of his person to the struggling patriots of Spain.' Canning went on, amidst roars of laughter, to describe Lord Nugent's luggage, helmet, and uniform. (*Hansard*, vol. x. p. 1275.) Sir R. Wilson, for his conduct on this occasion, was deprived of the foreign orders which he had received for his distinguished services. (See his complaint, ibid., p. 1257.)

[2] *Ann. Reg.* 1823, Hist., pp. 190–210.

countrymen; and the great mass of the nation stood aloof and regarded their downfall with indifference. But the difficulties of France began when the difficulties of her armies ceased. His own previous experience, the ruin of the Constitutional Cortes, might have taught prudence to a king who was less self-willed than Ferdinand the Bourbon. But nothing could exceed the imprudence of the king. The follies of the Constitutionalists were forgotten in the presence of the greater follies which resulted from the restoration. All the Acts of the Constitutional Government were declared null and void; everyone connected with the Constitutional Cortes was forbidden to approach within five leagues of the king's route to Madrid; the clergy, with Don Carlos, the king's brother, at their head, clamoured for the restoration of the Inquisition. It was in vain that the Duc d'Angoulême tendered more moderate counsels: the advice of the French was disregarded by the Spanish Royalists. The absolute government of Ferdinand was, in every respect, more wretched than the Constitutional Government of the Cortes. 'The constituted authorities did not administer justice; the country was overrun with banditti; and neither life nor property was secure against the attacks of these lawful and lawless depredators.'[1]

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Louis XVIII. had solemnly undertaken that hostilities should cease from the moment when Ferdinand was free. Ferdinand had been delivered by the bayonets of the French army; hostilities had, in one sense, ceased; but the French Army of Occupation still remained in Spain. Difficult as the task of invading Spain had seemed in the spring, the difficulty of evacuating Spain seemed much greater in the autumn. The French Army of Occupation formed the only guarantee against disorder or even civil war. The French Army of Occupation formed the only guarantee for the moderate treatment of the Spanish

The embarrassment of France after her victory.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Hist., pp. 209, 210. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 459.

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Constitutionalists. In the commencement of 1824 a treaty was signed between France and Spain by which France undertook to maintain an army of 45,000 men in Spain for the next six months.[1] The arrangement was inevitable; but it obviously altered the whole conditions of the Franco-Spanish war. The same causes which had led to the retention of a French garrison for six months might possibly involve the occupation of Spain by France for six years. France would thus obtain a preponderating influence in South-Western Europe which was equally opposed to the traditions of the British Foreign Office and to the best interests of the British nation. The occupation of Spain alone was, indeed, a matter of less importance than diplomatists nurtured in the atmosphere of the Foreign Office might have imagined. Spain was only great in her historic past. Anarchy and bankruptcy had reduced her to impotence. Spain, however, still nominally retained the rich colonial empire which the Spaniards of another generation had won for their country; the future of the Spanish colonies was a subject on which no great trading country could afford to be indifferent; and rumours reached the Foreign Office that the French Government was contemplating indemnity for its expenditure by the forcible conquest of some of the South American colonies of Spain.[2]

The condition of the Spanish colonies.

The condition of Spanish South America made it essential that something should be done. Bolivar, by a victory at Carabolo, in 1820, had practically destroyed the sole chance which Spain retained of reconquering her colonial empire. The Spanish Government only occupied a few positions and ports on the continent. Spanish cruisers, issuing from these ports, preyed on the merchantmen of other countries trading with the insurgent colonies; and, as the trade with Spain was mainly

[1] Authority for this statement will be found in Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 460.

[2] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 20.

conducted by British merchants, the depredations of the Spanish cruisers formed a constant source of irritation to this country. Remonstrances were continually addressed to the Spanish Government, but nothing was done. At length, in 1821, a Spanish privateer, the 'Panchita,' captured a British merchant vessel, the 'Lord Collingwood,' carried her into Porto Rico, and procured her condemnation, on the ground that 'she was found trading with the vessels of Buenos Ayres.' Buenos Ayres had long 'ceased to yield obedience to the mother country, and every vestige of Spanish authority' had 'disappeared from that colony.' The owner of the 'Lord Collingwood' complained to Lord Londonderry. Lord Londonderry desired the British minister at Madrid to remonstrate with the Spanish Government. The Spanish Government promised inquiry, but from July to October 1822 they did nothing. Canning, succeeding to the Foreign Office, was clear that British forbearance had been extended already too far. 'Representations and remonstrances' had 'been made to the Spanish Government;' inquiry and redress had 'been promised; but redress there' had 'been none.' 'Neither the pride, nor the interest, nor the patience of this country' could bear these outrages any longer. The British minister at Madrid was instructed to inform the Spanish Government that orders had been issued to the Admiralty 'to adopt the most decisive and summary measures for affording protection to his Majesty's subjects, and to the navigation of the West Indian seas.' 'To sweep the sea' alone 'would be unavailing, so long as the pirates find sure and inviolable asylum in the ports and fastnesses of Cuba.' The commander of the British squadron was, therefore, directed to land on the coast of Cuba, and, with or without the co-operation of the Government of Havana, 'to take signal vengeance' on the pirates 'for the outrages which have in so many

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instances been committed by them against the commerce, persons, and lives of his Majesty's subjects.'[1]

Canning's despatch was dated the 18th of October, 1822. At that very time the Duke of Wellington was defending the cause of Spain at Verona. The Constitutional Government of Spain could not afford to quarrel with its only ally. Its chief chance of safety lay in the opposition of England to foreign intervention in the affairs of another country. The Spanish Government at once gave in. A decree was issued acknowledging the right of trading to the insurgent colonies, and assigning 40,000,000 reals for the satisfaction of the claims of British subjects.[2] This concession, however, did not reconcile the British Government to the unfortunate condition of the Spanish colonies. 'Every day,' Canning wrote to Wellington on the 8th of November, 'convinces me more and more that in the present state of the world, in the present state of the Peninsula, and in the present state of this country, the American questions are out of all proportion more important to us than the European, and that if we do not seize and turn them to our advantage in time we shall rue the loss of an opportunity never to be recovered.' 'Every day,' he wrote again on the same date,[3] 'brings some fresh report of wrong inflicted on our commerce by vessels bearing the flag of Spain and acting under Spanish authorities. Accounts have been received at the Admiralty only to-day by which it appears that the Spanish governor of Porto Cabello (the only place of which the Royalist forces are in possession in the whole extent of the province of Columbia) has commissioned several ships of war to cruise against the merchant ships of every country presuming to trade with the insurgent colonies. It is impossible that this country should much longer put up with such outrageous injury.'

Canning desires to recognise the South American Colonies.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 377.

[2] *State Papers* vol. ix. p. 897. and vol. x. 867.

[3] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. pp. 511, 514.

The British Government were, then, dissatisfied; and, in the meanwhile, other powers were insinuating that Spain had purchased British support at Verona by concessions in America. Wellington, arriving in Paris on his return from Verona, found De Villèle full of these reports. De Villèle commented on the jealousy excited in France by every measure which might alter the situation of England 'either in respect to commerce or territory,' and complained of the embarrassment in which our proceedings towards Cuba had involved the French Government. He said that he 'had offered to mediate between Spain and any of her colonies of which the Spanish Government might be disposed to recognise the independence, and to engage to stipulate for every commercial advantage for Spain, but for none for France which Great Britain should not already enjoy.' He offered to place a French expedition at the disposal of the Spanish Government, provided that France was placed on a commercial equality with Great Britain; and, warming as he proceeded, he concluded with a threat that France would not submit to any extension of British advantages or British territory.[1] The Duke naturally repeated the remarkable conversation to Canning. Canning only saw in the threat additional reasons to pursue his own policy. 'I confess,' he answered, 'I long to tell M. de Villèle (if it were worth while, and if this were the moment) that we *will* trade with the late Spanish American colonies, whether France likes it or not; that we will not respect the Spanish guarda costas, which attempt to interdict that trade to us; and that, if France sends a large fleet to help the guarda costas, we will send a larger to watch (at least) their operations.'[2]

Growing jealousy between France and England.

For the moment Canning was satisfied with this private intimation of his views to the Duke of Wellington. So long as France and Spain were at peace it was unneces-

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 637. [2] Ibid., p. 650.

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sary to take any formal notice of the threat of the French minister. But when all 'hopes of accommodation' were, unhappily, extinguished, it became requisite to define the conditions on which the British Government would continue neutral. One of these conditions related to the insurgent colonies. 'Time and the course of events,' wrote Canning to the British minister, at Paris, 'appear to have substantially decided their separation from the mother country; although the formal recognition of those provinces, as independent states, by his Majesty may be hastened or retarded by various external circumstances, as well as by the more or less satisfactory progress in each state towards a regular and settled form of government. Spain has been long apprised of his Majesty's opinions upon this subject. Disclaiming in the most solemn manner any intention of appropriating to himself the smallest portion of the late Spanish possessions in America, his Majesty is satisfied that no attempt will be made by France to bring under her dominion any of those possessions, either by conquest or by cession from Spain.'[1]

Canning's views upon the South American question.

He appoints consuls to the South American ports.

While the issue of the war was doubtful Canning took no further steps towards the recognition of the Spanish colonies. The rapid progress of the French army, however, forced the question into prominence. Rumours were still heard that France was meditating the conquest of South America in the name of Spain.[2] It was notorious that such a proceeding would be approved by all the great Continental powers, and that England would be the solitary country in Europe opposed to it. In the month in which the Duc d'Angoulême marched upon Madrid, Canning took the opportunity of sounding Rush, the American minister, on the views of the United States upon the subject. Rush, however, had no instructions from his Government upon

[1] *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 69.
[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 137, 140.

it, and Canning was consequently compelled to act alone. The British Ministry had contemplated the appointment of consuls at the South American ports in the autumn of 1822. They had refrained from appointing them then because they were reluctant to take any steps unfriendly towards Spain at a time when the whole of the Continental powers of Europe were contemplating interference in her affairs. In 1823 it was no longer necessary to abstain from an act of an unfriendly nature. The French army had done its work; the despatch of consuls to South America could have no influence in Europe; and the Ministry accordingly determined that the time had arrived for sending consuls to those places.

His interview with Polignac.

The appointment of consuls at the South American ports was, however, only one of the steps which Canning determined on taking. In October 1823 he had a protracted interview with the Prince de Polignac, the French Ambassador in London, and explained to him the exact views of the British Cabinet. 'The British Government,' he said, 'were of opinion that any attempt to bring Spanish America again under its ancient submission to Spain must be entirely hopeless; that all negotiation for that purpose would be unsuccessful; and that the prolongation or renewal of the war for the same object would be only a waste of human life.' 'If war should be unhappily prolonged,' however, 'the British Government would remain strictly neutral; but the junction of any foreign power in an enterprise of Spain against the colonies would be viewed by them as constituting an entirely new question, and one upon which they must take such decision as the interests of Great Britain might require.' Polignac concurred in believing 'it to be utterly hopeless to reduce Spanish America to the state of its former relation to Spain;' but he declared 'that the French Government could not give nor venture to form an opinion as to what

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might be the best arrangement between Spain and her colonies until the King of Spain should be at liberty. They would then be ready to enter upon it, in concert with their allies, and with Great Britain among the number.' Canning having suggested that any fresh attempt to interfere with British trade 'might be best cut short by a speedy and unqualified recognition of the Spanish American States,' Polignac observed 'that he could not conceive what could be meant, under the present circumstances,' by the expression; 'that there existed no government in these colonies which could offer any appearance of solidity; and that the acknowledgment of American independence, so long as such a state of things continued, appeared to him to be nothing less than a real sanction of anarchy. It would be worthy of the European Governments to endeavour to bring back to a principle of union in government, whether monarchical or aristocratic, people among whom absurd and dangerous theories were now keeping up agitation and discord.' Canning contented himself with replying that, 'however desirable the establishment of a monarchical form of government might be, his Government could not take upon itself to put it forward as a condition of the recognition of the South American provinces.'

He refuses to go into a Conference on the colonial question.

Before this conversation occurred Ferdinand had been liberated by French bayonets. At liberty, he decided on inviting the Cabinets of his 'dear and intimate allies to a Conference at Paris, to the end that their plenipotentiaries, assembled there along with those of his Catholic Majesty, may aid Spain in adjusting the affairs of the revolted countries of America.' The 'dear and intimate allies' of the liberated autocrat were the autocratic courts of Paris, St. Petersburg, and Vienna. His invitation was addressed to the Spanish ministers at these places. A copy of it only was forwarded to the British minister at Madrid.

Canning had some doubt whether an invitation given in so indirect and unusual a form deserved any answer at all. The Conference which the Spanish Government proposed was to assemble on the basis that it was expedient to aid Spain in adjusting the affairs of her revolted colonies. But it was becoming every day more plain that the only possible adjustment of those affairs which this country could tolerate was their complete separation from Spain. An extensive commercial connection had grown up between this country and South America, 'to such an extent as to require some direct protection by the establishment of consuls. As to any further step to be taken by his Majesty towards the acknowledgment of the *de facto* Governments of America, the decision must depend upon various circumstances. But it appears manifest to the British Government that, if so large a portion of the globe should remain much longer without any recognised political existence, the consequences of such a state of things must be most injurious to the interests of all European nations. For these reasons the British Government is decidedly of opinion that the recognition of such of the new states as have established *de facto* their separate political existence cannot be much longer delayed. The British Government' desired that Spain 'should have the grace and advantage of leading the way in that recognition among the Powers of Europe. But the Court of Madrid must be aware that' their discretion in this respect could not 'be indefinitely bound up by that of his Catholic Majesty,' and that the desire which they felt 'to leave this proceeding to Spain' might 'be overborne by considerations of a more comprehensive nature—considerations regarding not only the essential interests of his Majesty's subjects, but the relations of the old world with the new.' Under these circumstances the British Government did not think it necessary to go into a Conference to declare anew an opinion which they had

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already expressed to the Spanish Government, and which they had taken every opportunity of communicating to the other Continental powers.[1]

The United States deprecate European interference in South America.

Such were the grounds on which Canning nominally refused to take part in the proposed Conference at Paris. But his refusal was in reality due to his distrust of the novel system of governing the world by congresses, and to his dislike of congresses, in which British counsels were unattended to. 'We protested at Laybach; we remonstrated at Verona: our protest was treated as waste paper; our remonstrances mingled with the air.'[2] His refusal to take part in the Conference was emphasised by the message which the President of the United States simultaneously addressed to Congress. The President alluded to the striking fact that the allied powers of Europe had thought proper to interfere by force in the internal affairs of Spain. This interference was a matter of no moment to the Government of the United States. But the case would be very different if the allied powers should apply the same principles to the Spanish provinces of South America. Interposition there would endanger the peace and happiness of the United States, and could not be regarded with indifference. The United States were still willing 'to leave the parties to themselves;' but they could only do so 'in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course.'

The Paris Conference fails.

The President's message and Canning's despatch virtually destroyed the project of the Paris Conference. It was still open to the allied powers to assemble and discuss the Spanish question. But it was obvious that the discussion could only be conducted on the assumption that nothing whatever should be done. Spain might possibly

[1] The papers from which the preceding extracts are taken will be found in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. x. pp. 708–719; *Ann. Reg.*, 1824, Chron., p. 99.* See also Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 188–194, where the inner history of the matter will be found.

[2] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 37.

be encouraged to continue her impotent exertions for the recovery of her colonial empire; but no other country would be permitted to assist her with a single vessel or a single battalion. Canning's despatches had made it plain that such assistance would be followed by the immediate recognition of the South American Provinces by Great Britain; the President's message had made it equally clear that such assistance would lead to a declaration of war from the United States. The President of the United States and Canning had practically settled the South American question. Canning, indeed, still hesitated to adopt the extreme course of recognising the insurgent colonies. He waited patiently for reports from the new consuls on their exact condition. He waited, too, in the hope that Spain herself might have the generosity to acknowledge a state of things which she had no power to modify. He waited in vain. Mortified at the refusal of the British Ministry, encouraged by the assent of the other powers to the Conference, the Spanish Government protested against the isolated policy of the British Cabinet. But their protest proved as idle as their original invitation. The Conference met at Paris, but it was only attended by the ordinary representatives of the various courts who had agreed to it.[1] The steady refusal of Great Britain to be a party to it, and the firm attitude of the United States, made its meeting an impotent ceremony.

The recognition of Buenos Ayres, Columbia, and Mexico.

The Conference was assembled in the summer of 1824. The British Parliament was prorogued on the 25th of June. The commencement of the recess afforded the Cabinet an opportunity for reviewing their position and deliberating on their future policy. It was impossible for any reasonable man to doubt that Spain had proved her inability to reduce her insurgent colonists to obedience; but it was equally impossible for any reasonable man to

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 60.

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deny that the different colonies stood in various positions towards the mother country. In Peru the Spaniards still maintained a desultory warfare. The information about Chili was too imperfect to allow any satisfactory judgment to be formed upon it. In Columbia the Spaniards had till very recently possessed the solitary port of Puerto Cabello, whose situation enabled them to retain a doubtful hold upon the colony. Mexico, though freed from the troops of the mother country, was the prey of various claimants for its throne and the scene of intestine disorders. But the Spaniards were themselves prepared to admit that the vast territory of which Buenos Ayres is the capital, and which then bore the name of its chief town, was in a more favourable situation. Every account received from South America agreed in referring to the satisfactory condition of this territory and the consolidation of its Government. The British Ministry accordingly decided to recognise its independence by negotiating a commercial treaty with its *de facto* Government. Instructions to this effect were issued in August to Parish, who had been appointed Consul-General at Buenos Ayres in the previous autumn. But these instructions formed only the precursors of more extended measures in the same direction. Before the year closed satisfactory reports were received of the state of affairs in Mexico and Columbia. The establishment of commercial relations with Buenos Ayres was accordingly followed by the recognition of these republics; and the measures which had been taken with this object were formally announced in the speech from the throne at the commencement of 1825.[1]

The policy which was thus adopted was the inevitable result of Canning's proceedings during the preceding

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 61. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. p. 4. A very useful paper on the condition of the Spanish colonies will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 116–125. Cf. Conde de Ofalia's despatch (*State Papers*, vol. xii. p. 959). For the appointment of consuls see *Ann. Reg.*, 1823, Chron., p. 135.

years. But in the eyes of autocratic sovereigns the recognition of insurgent colonists was disastrous, because 'it tended to encourage the revolutionary spirit which it had been found so difficult to restrain in Europe.'[1] Continental powers, moreover, had some little excuse for their irritation in the unusual manner in which they were treated by the British Foreign Minister. *Fortis in re*, Canning had not schooled himself to be *suavis in modo*. Intent on his end, he cared little for the susceptibilities of those whose opinions were opposed to his own. Austria led the way on all great political questions, and Austria was a mere synonym for Metternich, her minister. Metternich and Castlereagh had corresponded on terms of the closest intimacy. Metternich and Canning watched each other like skilful swordsmen, each afraid of the other's thrust. Canning had no patience with a minister who was prepared to crush the rising spirit of liberty in its birth. Metternich could not understand the object of a statesman who seemed bent on imposing on Great Britain the, to his eyes, impracticable policy of the United States. Even Canning's words seemed as unintelligible as his object. The British minister at Vienna was led to believe that Canning rested his policy on his conversation with Polignac in the previous autumn. The French Government was, on the contrary, induced to think that Great Britain was on the eve of recognising the insurgent colonies; while a foreign minister in London was led to report that the British Cabinet would have taken part in the proposed Conference if it had been held in London, and not in Paris. Diplomatists complained that the ordinary rules of official correspondence had been ignored by the statesman who had revolutionised the foreign policy of Great Britain; and the allies, who had enjoyed the confidence of Castlereagh, declared that no communications had been made to them which could have enabled

Distrust of Canning abroad,

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 79.

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and in England.

them to judge correctly the grounds on which the decisions of the British Government were taken.[1]

Canning cared but little for the remonstrances of Metternich; but he had other difficulties in his way which were less easily got over. The king held strong opinions, or, as Lord Liverpool termed them, strong prejudices, on foreign politics, and exerted all his influence and all his authority to prevent the recognition of insurgent colonists. In George IV.'s view their recognition involved a secession from the Quadruple Alliance and an adoption of Liberal or even Jacobin principles. Besides these general objections, moreover, Great Britain, in George IV.'s judgment, had especial reasons for refusing to sanction insurrection of any kind. The page which he most regretted in the history of his father's reign was that on which the loss of America was related; the subject which gave his own advisers the greatest anxiety was the disturbed state of Ireland. Was Great Britain to condone the revolt of the United States by favouring the severance of the South American colonies from Spain? Was Great Britain to hold out encouragement to every disaffected Irishman by recognising rebellion in the New World?[2] If, indeed, the king had stood alone, his views would have been of minor importance. But the king's opinions were shared by a minority in the Cabinet—a minority which found its chief exponent in the Duke of Wellington. Wellington had never entirely agreed with Canning's policy towards Spain. He thought that the Government was being driven by a revolutionary faction to support revolutionary measures;[3] he hesitated to endorse the prin-

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 205, 206.

[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 368, 401–404.

[3] 'A party in this country have long wished that we should be defeated by the modern revolutionists; but, that object having failed and being hopeless, they now wish to enlist us under their banners, and to obtain for them our support.' (Ibid., vol. ii. p. 134.) It is worth while comparing with this Lord Redesdale's strong opinion, in *Colchester*, vol. iii. p. 300: 'Liberality is the word of the day. That word produced twenty years of confusion and misery in France; it threatened Italy, Spain,

ciple which Canning laid down in the autumn of 1823, that one country was not entitled to transfer to another the right of regaining its territories by force. He objected, in the spring of 1824, to the production of the Spanish papers, because their publication was likely to elicit a Parliamentary demonstration in favour of the insurgents. He dissented from the instructions which were given to the Consul-General at Buenos Ayres, and the haste with which steps were taken for entering into a specific treaty with the Government of that city; and he tendered his resignation to Lord Liverpool when the Cabinet resolved to recognise the independence of Columbia and Mexico.[1] With the single exception of Canning, Wellington was the most influential member of the Government, and his views, it must be recollected, were shared by other members of it. Three Peers, of unequal ability and importance, were opposed to the recognition of Buenos Ayres. Lord Eldon, the most influential of the three, characteristically grumbled at the decision, but as characteristically gave in. Lord Sidmouth, who still retained a seat in the Cabinet without office, protested, and ultimately availed himself of a private reason to retire from a Government whose opinions he no longer shared.[2] Lord Westmoreland, who had, perhaps, smaller abilities than any other member of the Cabinet, retained to the last his objections to the measure. No member of the Government would have either asked or cared for his opinion; yet his action on the subject, by a strange accident, was on the eve of breaking up the Administration.

The accident came about in this way. Lord West-

and Portugal, and produced much mischief in all those countries. It still threatens France; it annoys Germany; it has spread into Russia; and it is seriously threatening the British Empire with the overthrow of all its ancient institutions, by which it has hitherto flourished.' These views show the strength of the feeling which Canning had to overcome in 1824.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 135, 229, 297, 366.

[2] *Colchester*, vol. iii. p. 351.

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Lord Westmoreland's visit to Paris.

moreland's eldest son, Lord Burghersh, was minister at Florence, and Lord Westmoreland desired to pay him a visit in the autumn holiday of 1824. He reached Paris; but on his arrival he found that Louis XVIII. was dead; and he recollected that he had himself been very seasick in crossing the Channel. The effects of seasickness, and a desire to watch the results of the king's death, induced him to remain at Paris. The new king naturally paid attention to a member of the British Cabinet. He spoke to him about Spanish America; and he was, perhaps, not altogether displeased at finding that Westmoreland's views did not differ very materially from his own. On his return home Westmoreland asked an audience of George IV., and communicated to him his conversation with Charles X. He sought an interview with Canning, and told him what the King of France had said. Canning was annoyed that the British Government should even temporarily have had a spokesman in the French Court, whose views were opposed to his own policy; and he decided on imitating Westmoreland's example, and on paying a flying visit to Paris. Sir Charles Stuart, who had filled the position of ambassador at that court for ten years, had just been recalled. Lord Granville had been selected as his successor; and Canning determined to run over to Paris and to pay a short visit to the new ambassador. The rumour of his intention reached the ears of the Duke of Wellington, who at once saw strong objections to a visit which half the world would be certain to regard as connected with some important negotiation. He tried to dissuade his colleague from carrying out his intention. Canning, warming at the remonstrance, expatiated on the unfairness towards himself of Westmoreland's visit, and forwarded the correspondence to Liverpool, with a complaint that the king repeated his private conversations to the duke, who, in his turn, related them to other people. It required all the patience of the Duke of Wellington and all the tact of Lord Liverpool to pacify their col-

league. It is said, indeed, that nothing but the adoption, immediately afterwards, of his own views averted Canning's retirement from the Government.[1]

Canning induced the Government to recognise the revolted colonies of Spain. But the recognition was purchased at the cost of estranging every Continental court. It had been resisted at every stage by the king, and by a strong minority in the Cabinet; it had almost produced the disruption of the Administration. It had been effected; and the merits of the policy, whatever they might be, were properly attributable to Canning alone. They justified the egotism of his boast, which was little relished by the colleagues who had resisted his policy: '*I* resolved that, if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.'[2] The announcement that the insurgent colonies had been recognised was made a full month before Parliament met; and the passage in the Speech from the throne which related to the matter contained, therefore, nothing that was new. Yet the simple words in which the subject was dealt with rekindled the opposition of King and Cabinet. The king denounced the Speech in dog Latin as 'Speechum catticissimum,' and declared that 'he would not have delivered it in its present state.' Fortunately for George IV. a sharp attack of gout, and the loss of some false teeth, gave him an excuse for staying away. Lord Eldon, on whom the task of reading the speech fell, remarked that he didn't much admire its composition or its matter, and that he should read it better if he liked it better.[3]

Canning prevails.

[1] The curious correspondence about Lord Westmoreland's unlucky visit to Paris will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 313–326. For Canning's threatened resignation see Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 95; and Greville, vol. i. p. 105.

[2] The speech was made two years after the recognition of the Spanish colonies, Dec. 12, 1826. (*Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. p. 397.) Greville says Canning gave offence to his colleagues by the concluding sentence. The '*I*' was not relished. (Vol. i. p. 83.)

[3] *Colchester*, vol. iii. p. 363. *Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 534.

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However distasteful passages in the speech may have been to the stout old Tory Chancellor and to the king, no one in either House of Parliament condemned the recognition of the Spanish colonies. The utmost that the Opposition ventured on doing was to suggest that the Foreign Office had torn a page out of the Whig programme, and that the policy which had been adopted at Christmas might have been safely acted on nine months before. These doubts were rather suggested than raised by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords.[1] They were insisted on with much more force by Brougham in the House of Commons. Canning undertook, in replying to them, to show that the time at which the colonies had been recognised had been peculiarly appropriate for the purpose. The thirteen or fourteen separate states which composed the territory of Buenos Ayres had only lately been collected into a federal union. As late as 1822 the last of the Spanish forces had been removed from Puerto Cabello, in Columbia, and since then Columbia had risked her existence on a distant war with Spain in Peru. During the last few months an adventurer had endeavoured to possess himself of the sceptre of Mexico; and the failure of his attempt, and the consequent cessation of civil war, afforded an appropriate opportunity for the recognition of that country. Canning was, therefore, able to plead peculiar circumstances to make the recognition of all these states particularly appropriate to the time; and the speech told, because no one cared to reply that the constant revolutions which these states had endured since their separation from the mother country would have furnished him with a similar argument on a dozen other occasions. With more dexterity he turned the laugh against Brougham, who had declared that the Ministry had only followed the lead of the Opposition. 'The honourable and learned gentleman having,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 21.

in the course of his Parliamentary life, proposed and supported almost every species of innovation which could be practised towards the Constitution, it was not easy for ministers to do anything in the affair of South America without borrowing, or seeming to borrow, something from him. Break away in what direction they would, it was all alike. "Oho!" said the honourable and learned gentleman, "I was there before you—you would not have thought of that, now, if I had not given you the hint." In the reign of Queen Anne there was a sage and grave critic of the name of Dennis, who, in his old age, got it into his head that he wrote all the good plays that were acted at that time. At last a tragedy came forth with a most imposing storm of hail and thunder. At the first peal Dennis cried out, "That's *my* thunder." So with the honourable and learned gentleman: there was no noise or stir for the good of mankind in any part of the globe but he instantly claimed it for his thunder.'[1]

France had acquired a preponderating influence in Spain; but her power in the Spanish Peninsula no longer possessed the significance which in previous generations would have attached to it. The presence of a French army in Spain, however, foreboded another possible danger to this country. The frontier of Spain marches upon that of Portugal. The impulse of every political movement which shook society in one country was felt in the other; and, however willing Great Britain might be to ignore the plots and revolutions of which Spain was the theatre, it was impossible to regard the internal disorders and external dangers of Portugal with equal indifference. For nearly two centuries Great Britain and Portugal had been on terms of the closest

Portugal.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 77. An account of Dennis's thunder will be found in the notes to the earlier editions of the *Dunciad*, book ii. line 226:—

'Tis yours to shake the soul
With thunder rumbling from the mustard bowl.'

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alliance. By a treaty of 1642 the sovereigns of the two countries had agreed 'not to do or undertake anything, either by themselves or other persons, against one another, nor against their kingdoms, by sea or land, nor consent or adhere to any war, counsel, or treaty that may be to the prejudice of one or the other.' By a secret article of a treaty of 1661 Great Britain agreed 'to defend and protect all the conquests or colonies belonging to the Crown of Portugal against all its enemies, as well future as present.'[1] Nothing, therefore, could have been closer than the alliance which existed between Portugal and Great Britain. No treaty, however, could have prevented the wave of revolution which was desolating Spain from beating on the adjacent shores of Portugal. The triumph of the Constitutionalists in the one country in 1820 had immediately provoked a constitutional revolution in the other. The effects of the reaction which French intrigue and French arms had produced in Madrid were certain to be felt in Lisbon.

When the revolution of 1820 had occurred John VI., King of Portugal, was quietly ruling in his transatlantic dominions of Brazil. Portugal had been governed for thirteen years from Rio de Janeiro; and the absence of the Court from Lisbon had offended the Portuguese and prepared them for change. After the mischief had been done John VI. was persuaded to return to his native country, leaving his eldest son, Dom Pedro, Regent of Brazil in his absence. Before setting out on his journey he gave the prince public instructions for his guidance, which practically made Brazil independent of Portugal; and he added private directions to the prince, in case any emergency should arise which should make it impracticable to preserve Brazil for Portugal, to place the crown on his

[1] These articles will be found commented on in a *note verbale* handed to Canning by the Portuguese Ambassador. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 194. See also ibid., p. 422.

own head, and thus save the great Transatlantic territory for the House of Braganza.[1] Leaving these parting injunctions with his son, John VI. returned to the old kingdom which he had deserted nearly fourteen years before. He reached Lisbon, and found the Constitutionalists' in undisputed possession of power. He found also that the action of the Constitutionalists in Portugal was calculated to induce Brazil to throw off the authority of the mother country. The Cortes in Portugal insisted on the suppression of the supreme tribunals in Brazil, on the establishment of Provincial Juntas, and on the return of the Regent to Portugal. The Brazilians declined to adopt measures which they considered ruinous to their dignity, and persuaded the Regent to disobey the orders of the Cortes. A small body of Portuguese troops quartered in Brazil endeavoured to overawe the prince, but proved powerless to do so. In May 1822 the prince was persuaded to declare himself Perpetual Defender of the Brazils. In the following September the Brazilians induced him to raise their country to the dignity of an empire, and to declare himself its constitutional emperor.

The return of John VI. to Lisbon.

Brazil declared independent.

The news that the Brazilians had declared themselves an independent empire reached Europe at a critical period. Monarchs and diplomatists were busily deliberating at Verona on the affairs of Spain and of the Spanish colonies. No one, however, could avoid comparing the position of Portugal and Brazil with that of Spain and her dependencies. In Portugal, as in Spain, a revolution, promoted by the military classes, had led to the institution of a democratic Government. In Portugal, as in Spain, the sovereign had been compelled to assent to a state of things which he was powerless to resist, but which, it was certain, he disapproved. The Portuguese, like the Spaniards, had hitherto prided themselves on the

Effects of Spanish action on Portugal.

[1] For the public instructions see *State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 970. For the private instructions see Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 195.

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rich colonial empire which they possessed in the New World. Like the Spaniards, they now saw themselves virtually deprived of their Transatlantic possessions. The King of Portugal was united by the closest ties to the King of Spain. Their two countries marched upon each other; their people came from a common origin; they spoke languages which bore a close resemblance the one to the other. Every word spoken in Spain, every shot that was fired in that country, found an echo in the adjacent kingdom of Portugal.

Autocratic reaction in Portugal.

The evident determination of France to interfere in Spain created anxiety in Portugal. The Portuguese Cortes apprehended that the logical consequence of French interference in the one country was French interference in the other. The Cortes could not help reflecting that their power was due to the impulse which revolution in Spain had imparted to revolutionary principles. The position of a French army on the Spanish frontier roused the dormant spirits of the Portuguese Absolutists. In February 1823 a vast insurrection against the Constitution broke out in Northern Portugal. The insurgents, who in the first instance obtained considerable success, were with difficulty defeated. But the revolt had been hardly quelled before the Absolutists recovered their flagging spirits. Every step taken by the Duc d'Angoulême in his progress from the Bidassoa to Madrid raised their hopes of ultimate success. The king's second son, the notorious Dom Miguel, fled from his father's palace and threw in his lot with the insurgents. For a moment the king stood firm and denounced his son's proceedings. But the reaction which had set in was too strong to be resisted. The Cortes was closed, a new Ministry appointed, and autocracy re-established in Portugal.[1]

[1] For these events see *Ann. Reg.*, 1822, Hist., pp. 257–268; and 1823, Hist., pp. 211–217. *State Papers*, vol. ix. pp. 807–811; vol. x. pp. 69–78; and vol. xi. p. 852. Cf. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 193–199.

The re-establishment of autocracy in Portugal marked the commencement of a series of intrigues in which this country was deeply interested. One party in the new Government, with M. de Palmella at its head, was disposed to incline to moderate measures and to listen to the advice which it received from the British Ministry and from the British Ambassador, Sir Edward Thornton. Another party, of which M. de Subsérra was the representative, was in favour of an intimate union with France, and ready to listen to the contrary counsels of M. de Neuville, the French Minister at Lisbon. M. de Palmella, despairing of founding a settled form of government amidst the disorders which surrounded him on every side, applied to the British Ministry for troops to give stability to the Administration. The demand arrived in London in July 1823. It occasioned the greatest possible embarrassment to the British Ministry. The British Ministry, on the one hand, could not afford to affront the Portuguese Government; on the other hand, it could hardly venture to allow British soldiers to interfere in the internal affairs of another country. Nor were the ministers themselves agreed on the subject. Wellington was prepared to risk the inconveniences which were attendant on complying with the demand, and to save Portugal from the influence of France. Liverpool, on the contrary, had a cautious dread of a policy which bore an unpleasant resemblance to the occupation of Naples and Piedmont by Austria; and Liverpool's arguments were aided by one very practical consideration. Whether it were desirable to send troops or no, it was unquestionable that there were no troops to send. Hume's retrenchments had stripped the country of all superfluous soldiery, and there was not a single regiment available for the service. This indisputable fact strengthened the reasons which Lord Liverpool pleaded against a compliance with the Portuguese demand. A compromise, or, as Welling-

The Portuguese apply for British troops.

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ton put it, a half-measure, was resorted to. The demand for troops was refused, but a British squadron was sent to the Tagus, with a view of affording the King of Portugal the moral support of the British nation and a secure asylum in the event of any danger to his person.[1]

The revolution, headed by Dom Miguel, in 1824, fails.

Many months elapsed before the King of Portugal had occasion to avail himself of the possible asylum which was thus afforded to him. During the interval, under the advice of M. de Palmella, he pursued moderate measures, and paved the way for the restoration of a Constitutional Government. The evident leanings of M. de Palmella towards moderate measures,[2] however, alarmed the Portuguese Absolutists. Ever since the revolution of 1823 Dom Miguel had held the command of the army; and, on the night of the 29th of April, 1824, the prince suddenly ordered the arrest of the leading personages of the Government, and, under the pretext of suppressing an alleged conspiracy of Freemasons, called on the army to liberate their king, and to complete the triumph of the previous year. For nine days the king was a mere puppet in the hands of his son, and Dom Miguel was virtually master of Lisbon. On the 9th of May the king was persuaded by the foreign ministers in his capital to resume his authority; to retire on board the 'Windsor Castle,' a British man-of-war; to dismiss Dom Miguel from his command, and to order his attendance upon him. The prince, 'stricken with a sudden fatuity,' obeyed his father's commands, and was prevailed upon to go into voluntary exile. The revolution of 1824 terminated with his departure, and Portugal again enjoyed comparative tranquillity.[3]

With the return of tranquillity in Portugal the struggle recommenced between M. de Subsérra and the French in-

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 110–115. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 205.

[2] *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 206.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1824, Hist., p. 181. *State Papers*, vol. xi. pp. 852–860. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 210–223.

terest on the one side, and M. de Palmella and the English interest on the other. The recent disturbances which had agitated Portugal made it impossible for the king to place any firm reliance on the fidelity of the Portuguese army.' Distrusting his own troops, he had applied in 1823 for a British force, and had received a British squadron. Still distrusting his own troops in 1824, he was prevailed upon by M. de Subsérra to renew his application. Subsérra, indeed, had no desire to see a single British regiment in Lisbon; his main object was to introduce a French garrison into that capital; and he only applied to Great Britain because he fancied that the application was certain to be refused, and that after its refusal Great Britain would have no right to object to Portugal receiving from France the aid which the British Ministry was either unwilling or unable to afford her. The real object of the intrigue was detected by the British Ministry, and, with the possibility of French intervention before them, the Cabinet hesitated to refuse Subsérra's application. But it was almost as difficult to comply with the request of the Portuguese Government as it was embarrassing to refuse it. The British army was a little stronger than it had been in 1823, but its strength was only barely sufficient for the discharge of its numerous duties in every portion of the globe. An expedition could not be sent to Portugal without some announcement of it being communicated to Parliament; and it was very doubtful whether Parliament would approve the employment of British troops in a foreign country. Impressed with the force of these difficulties, the Ministry hesitated to adopt the proposal of the Portuguese Government. But, while deciding against the despatch of a British force, they found other means of complying with the Portuguese demand. George IV. was not only King of Britain; he was also King of Hanover; and as King of Hanover he could send Hanoverian troops to Portugal without provoking any debate

Renewed application for troops from Portugal.

CHAP. IX. 1824.

in the British Parliament. The king was, therefore, advised to apply to his Hanoverian Ministry and obtain their concurrence in a measure which seemed, on the whole, to present the fewest objections. Fortunately the news of the application oozed out in diplomatic circles. The French Government, seriously alarmed at the prospect of either Hanoverian or British troops in the Peninsula, sought for an explanation from Canning. Canning had the dexterity to elicit from them a written declaration that French troops should under no circumstances whatever enter Portugal. This declaration removed the dangers which had confronted the Cabinet. The application to the Hanoverian Ministry for assistance was at once withdrawn; and Portugal was left to work out its political regeneration without the intervention of foreign soldiery.[1]

Fresh negotiations between Portugal and Brazil.

M. de Subsérra's influence did not long survive the failure of this application. Ever since the return of John VI. to Portugal the British Ministry had been anxiously endeavouring to accomplish some agreement between Portugal and Brazil. But all Canning's arguments and all his influence had been powerless to effect any satisfactory arrangement. During the whole of 1822 and 1823 the matter remained in this state. Early in 1824, however, the chances of a reconciliation seemed a little more hopeful. The Brazilian Government decided on sending a Brazilian plenipotentiary to London to communicate with Canning and the Portuguese Ambassador to the British Court. The first discussions between the Portuguese minister in London and the Brazilian plenipotentiary did not offer much prospect of a settlement. The Brazilians demanded independence, the Portuguese sovereignty; 'and these two words, reciprocally interchanged, constituted the substance of what passed, and prevented

[1] The intrigue is related in Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 230–236. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 276, 281.

any progress being made towards a settlement.' Canning, desirous of helping the negotiators out of their dilemma, undertook to prepare a treaty of reconciliation. His project, which recognised the independence of Brazil, was at once accepted by the Brazilian plenipotentiary and rejected by the Portuguese Ambassador. Canning thereupon undertook the task of forwarding it to Lisbon. The Portuguese Ministry replied with a counter-proposal which contemplated the King of Portugal becoming senior Emperor of Brazil. Canning at once perceived the difficulty of persuading the Brazilian plenipotentiary to listen to this demand. But, for the moment, he laboured diligently and successfully to prevent the conference being broken up upon it. His success was only temporary. He was suddenly startled at discovering that the Portuguese Government, without acquainting the British Ministry, without acquainting the Austrian Ambassador, without even acquainting their own Ambassador at London, had taken the extraordinary course of communicating the counter-proposal direct to the Brazilian Government. Irritated beyond measure at this strange proceeding, in which he detected Subsérra's influence, Canning at once told the Portuguese Government that it must take its choice between England and France, and that while M. de Subsérra remained in office there could be no good understanding between England and Portugal. The bold language of the English minister fulfilled its purpose. M. de Subsérra was, within a month, removed from the Ministry. M. de Neuville, the French Ambassador at Lisbon, who had influenced M. de Subsérra's policy, was, on Canning's instigation, recalled; and, after a struggle which had lasted for nearly two years, British counsels obtained their customary ascendancy in the Portuguese Court.[1]

Canning decisively establishes his influence at Lisbon.

Canning had regained his ascendancy at Lisbon;

[1] The history of these intrigues is fully related in Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 243, 284–343.

CHAP. IX. 1825.

but the victory had been won at the cost of terminating the London Conference. It was impossible, however, to leave the Brazilian question in its existing condition. The British Ministry had at last decided on the recognition of the Spanish colonies, and every argument which suggested the recognition of Mexico, Columbia, and Buenos Ayres told with tenfold force in favour of the recognition of Brazil. Brazil had achieved as complete an independence as Buenos Ayres. She had a far more settled government than any of the Spanish colonies. If Portugal, therefore, hesitated to acknowledge the separate political independence of Brazil, it would be almost impossible for Great Britain to avoid recognising the Brazilian Empire. Even in the case of Spain, which was under the influence of France, Canning had desired to allow the mother country the grace of initiating the policy of recognition. He was much more anxious to do so in the case of Portugal, the oldest and firmest ally of Great Britain. He decided, therefore, on making one more effort with this view.

Portugal recognises Brazilian independence.

Sir Charles Stuart had just been recalled from his embassy at Paris. He had been offered the Governorship of Madras, a situation which he affected to believe was beneath his merits, and was, therefore, at the moment without employment. Canning decided on sending him on a special mission to Brazil, empowering him to proceed on his way by Lisbon, in order that he might inform himself of the exact opinions of the Portuguese Government. Stuart was to endeavour to induce the King of Portugal to cede legislative independence to Brazil, to confirm to Dom Pedro the royal authority which he indisputably exercised, and to reserve to himself only his own private property and his own titles and dignities. The Portuguese Ministry were not, however, prepared to adopt the advice which was thus given. They still adhered to the determination that their

sovereign should assume the title of Emperor of Brazil, and in that capacity accept Dom Pedro as his associate in the Imperial title.[1] Dom Pedro, on the contrary, as Sir Charles Stuart found on his arrival at Rio de Janeiro, could agree to no terms which gave his father a share in the empire. He, however, suggested, as a possible way out of the difficulty, that John VI. should abdicate the sovereignty of Brazil, should retain during his own life the Imperial title, but recognise his son as Emperor. This suggestion ultimately afforded the solution of the difficulty. The arrangement of other and more substantial matters was easily settled, and, on the 29th of August, 1825, a treaty was signed between Portugal and Brazil in which the independence of Brazil was formally recognised.[2]

Death of John VI.

The recognition of Brazil relieved the British Ministry from a great difficulty. All its objects with respect to Portugal were accomplished, and the influence of Great Britain was predominant both at Lisbon and at Rio de Janeiro. Hardly six months, however, passed after the conclusion of the treaty—'the ink with which this agreement was written was scarcely dry—when the unexpected death of the King of Portugal reunited on the same head the two crowns which it had been the policy of England as well as of Portugal and Brazil to separate.'[3] The Emperor of Brazil was undisputed heir to the throne of Portugal; but the union of the two crowns was not likely to be acceptable to the people of either nation. On the one hand, the Brazilians would not submit to be governed from Lisbon; on the other, Portuguese pride would revolt against the renewed experiment of an absent Court. John VI., during his last illness,

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 333–342. The English proposal was apparently made on the advice of the Duke of Wellington. See Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 420.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. xii. p. 674. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. 354.

[3] Canning, in House of Commons (*Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. p. 362).

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had made a temporary provision for the Government. He had appointed a Regency, and placed his own daughter, the Infanta Isabella, at the head of it. Dom Miguel, the brother of the Regent, an exile in Vienna, sent his sister a promise that he would respect this provisional arrangement, and the Regency was accordingly installed without any serious opposition.

Dom Pedro abdicates in favour of Donna Maria.

The news of the death of King John reached Brazil on the 24th of April. Without waiting for the advice, which the British Ministry hurriedly sent to him, Dom Pedro had the wisdom to resist the temptation of re-uniting the possessions of the House of Braganza in his own person. He accordingly abdicated the crown of Portugal in the hour in which it was offered to him. In refusing the throne of Portugal, however, he naturally desired to secure it for one of his own children. Donna Maria, his eldest daughter, whom he selected for the throne, was only seven years old. It was, therefore, necessary to make some provision for the conduct of the Government during her minority; and Dom Pedro, in consequence, confirmed his sister, Isabella, in the Regency to which her father had appointed her. To smooth the way for his daughter's reign he endeavoured to conciliate the Portuguese by conferring a constitution on Portugal. To remove the most obvious danger which beset her path he arranged that she should immediately be betrothed to her uncle, his brother, Dom Miguel. Political necessity reconciles upright men to the least justifiable arrangements. The unnatural alliance which Dom Pedro contemplated for his daughter was concurrently advocated by the British Ministry.

The arrangements which were thus made might seem satisfactory to bystanders, but they were not acceptable to those who were most immediately concerned in them. Dom Miguel could hardly be expected to await with patience his eventual union with a little girl of seven. The

Portuguese, who favoured his views, were certain to desire his earlier association in the Government. By Dom Pedro's Constitution, moreover, every person was excluded from the Regency who had not completed the twenty-fifth year of his age. Dom Miguel was only twenty-four; and he was, therefore, evidently ineligible for the post. But the Constitution left it doubtful whether Dom Miguel, on attaining his majority, would be entitled to supersede his sister as Regent of the kingdom. The Portuguese army, the section of the Portuguese nation which shared his extreme views, were encouraged by the Constitution to regard him as their eventual ruler and their present champion. Troubles soon broke out in Portugal. Regiments deserted and crossed the frontier; and the Spanish Government, glad to encourage absolutism, openly connived at these desertions. The matter assumed such serious proportions that Canning, in October, without even consulting the Cabinet, directed the British minister to withdraw from Madrid, in case the Spanish Government should not give up the arms of the deserters. The Cabinet found itself, without any warning, on the eve of war with Spain. Fortunately for Britain, the Court of Madrid was afraid to risk the consequences of an open rupture, and gave way. But, though it gave way, and was prodigal in its promises, it continued to encourage the spread of disaffection in Portugal, and to afford protection to the refugees and deserters who crossed from Portugal into Spain. These deserters, gradually increasing into a considerable force, openly proclaimed Dom Miguel their king, and as openly prepared for the invasion of Portugal from Spain. Forgetful of their promises to Britain, mindful only of their hatred of constitutional government, relying on the tacit approval of France, and on the open favour of Austria,[1] the Spaniards took no steps to enforce respect

Reaction in Portugal.

The threatened invasion from Spain.

[1] See Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 376, 382, 385, 412-419, 430, 439, 457.

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to their own neutrality. It was even hinted that Spanish officers and Spanish money were placed at the disposal of the rebel regiments. The Portuguese Regency, seriously alarmed, appealed to England, through its Ambassador in London, to redeem her numerous engagements, and to assist to repel what was to all intents and purposes a Spanish invasion.

Despatch of British troops to Portugal.

The application of the Portuguese Ambassador was made on the 3rd of December.[1] The British Ministry immediately replied that, whatever rumours might have reached this country on the subject, no accurate information respecting the Spanish invasion had been received; and that, without a more precise acquaintance with the facts, they were unable to do anything. On the following Friday the information which the Ministry thus awaited arrived. 'On Saturday,' to quote Canning's proud words in the House of Commons, the Cabinet 'came to a decision. On Sunday that decision received the sanction of his Majesty. On Monday it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament'—which were fortunately sitting—'and on this day (Tuesday), Sir, at the hour in which I have the honour of addressing you, the troops are on their march for embarcation.'[2]

Canning's declaration of policy.

The speech in which Canning thus announced the decision of the British Ministry was perhaps the most brilliant which he ever made. He began by tracing the various engagements which Britain had made with Portugal to prove that 'adherence to the national faith and regard to the national honour' left the Government no alternative. He proceeded to explain the steps which the Cabinet had taken to assist the Portuguese, and to dispose of the petty quibbling that an invasion of Portugal from Spain was not a Spanish invasion. Alluding

[1] It will be found in *State Papers*, vol. xiii. p. 1116.

[2] Canning, as a matter of fact, would have acted on the 3rd, without waiting for the fuller information. (See his letter to Lord Liverpool, Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 473.)

to the indirect support which Spain might receive from France, he emphatically declared that 'it is our duty to fly to the defence of Portugal, be the assailant who he may;' and he found in the autocracy of Spain and the freer atmosphere of Portugal fresh reasons for the course which he was pursuing. The war which Spain is waging against Portugal, he proceeded, is 'a war which has commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. If into that war this country should be compelled to enter, I much fear that she could not in such case avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new power in any future war which excites my utmost apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength, but it would be another to use it like a giant. The consciousness of such strength is undoubtedly a source of confidence and security; but, in the situation in which this country stands, our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it, but to content ourselves with making the professors of violent and exaggerated doctrines on both sides feel that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into an adversary.' The House rang with cheers as the orator proceeded. But the heartiest cheering, it was noticed, came from the Opposition benches. Never before had the principles of the Holy Alliance received so crushing a rebuke; never before had England so plainly ranged herself on the side of the Liberal element which was revolutionising mankind. 'I was certainly,' said Brougham, in a passage which was almost as much admired as Canning's speech, 'I was certainly one of those who held some years ago that we were under severe recognisances to keep the peace. I know the severity of the burthens under which this country labours; but if I feel their weight, if I feel apprehensive (as who must not?) of their effect, in case this most necessary measure should unhappily fail, I

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cannot but rely on those sound, enlightened, liberal, and truly English principles—principles worthy of our best times and of our most distinguished statesmen—which now govern this country in her foreign policy, and inspire the eloquence of the Right Honourable Secretary with a degree of fervour, energy, and effect extraordinary and unprecedented in this House—unprecedented (I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the Right Honourable gentleman.'[1] The bold language and decided action of the British Ministry were attended with satisfactory results. Within a fortnight of Canning's speech the first contingent of British troops entered the Tagus. The Spanish Government hastened to fulfil its forgotten promises. The French Government assured the Spaniards that they must expect no assistance from France. The disaffected among the Portuguese were discouraged by these proceedings; the well-affected derived confidence from the open support of Great Britain; and a crisis which had, at one moment, threatened to let loose the dogs of war on Western Europe passed away as rapidly as it had arisen.

His success

In Western Europe, then, a firm and consistent policy had been rewarded by a gratifying success. French troops still occupied the Spanish kingdom. But the Spain in which France had thus regained her predominance was the Spain without the Indies to which Canning had reduced it. In Portugal a constitutional government had been established by the Regent, and the presence of British troops had averted the dangers arising from the distractions of the State and the attitude of neighbouring nations. The affairs of Eastern Europe, however, still remained in the perplexed and perplexing condition into which the Greek insurrection had originally thrown them. Every day that passed increased the complications which

Turkey.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. pp. 343–398. Cf. Lord Bathurst's opinion, Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 514.

surrounded this question. In the summer of 1821 the differences between Russia and the Porte were susceptible of a comparatively easy solution. Russia, relying on the right which she had gained in the previous century at Ḳainardji, had simply insisted on the redress of the grievances of the Greeks, and on her own co-operation in the pacification of Wallachia and Moldavia. The failure of the Porte to comply with these demands within a specified time had led to the withdrawal of the Russian ambassador from Constantinople, and to the cessation of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Czar, however, whose hatred of revolution exceeded his hereditary hatred of the Turk, shrank from the responsibility of following up the withdrawal of his ambassador by a declaration of war. The Austrian internuncio and the British minister at Constantinople were encouraged by him to continue the negotiations at the point at which Von Strogonoff's departure had interrupted them. In consequence of their exertions the Porte, in the summer of 1822, was induced to give orders for the evacuation of the Principalities and to appoint two native Boyards to the government of those provinces. As the Turks were ready to promise merciful treatment to the insurgent Greeks, the original causes of difference between Turkey and Russia were practically removed.[1]

The navigation of the Black Sea.

But in the meanwhile fresh differences had arisen between Russia and the Porte. The navigation of the Black Sea was in theory confined only to those nations, England, France, and Russia,[2] which had secured a right to it under express treaties. But in practice any vessel which chose to hoist the flag of one of these powers concurrently enjoyed the right. The privilege was, perhaps naturally, abused. Greek vessels, in insurrection against the Porte,

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ix. pp. 659–673; Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 192.

[2] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 210.

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passed the Dardanelles under foreign colours; and the Porte consequently thought it necessary, in its own protection, to direct that all merchant vessels passing Constantinople should be searched. The order struck a fatal blow at the growing trade of Odessa, which was carried on principally in Greek vessels, or in foreign vessels under the Russian flag.[1] It subjected every grain vessel from every Russian port in the Black Sea to a humiliating ordeal, which became the more painful when some vessels carrying the Russian flag were seized. The Russian Government insisted that the Porte should either allow the vessels of all countries to pass the Dardanelles, or that it should at least respect the Russian flag.[2] Prudent bystanders could not, however, avoid perceiving in these fresh complications the increasing difficulty attending any arrangement between Russia and the Porte. The action of the Porte had raised a quarrel, which had originally only reference to the Greeks, into a dispute which intimately affected the honour and welfare of Russia.

Such was the position of the Eastern question at the period when the Congress of Verona assembled. Lord Strangford, the British minister at Constantinople, attended the preliminary sittings of the Congress, and brought with him the *précis* of a conference which he had held with the Turkish ministers. It appeared from this paper that the Turkish ministers had met Lord Strangford's demands for a more humane treatment of the Greeks with the retort that the insurrection in Greece was due to Russian agents. The Czar was annoyed at this accusation. He thought that Lord Strangford had failed sufficiently to repel the charge; and he was with difficulty pacified by the Duke of Wellington.[3] The duke, however, ultimately succeeded in persuading him

[1] *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 855.
[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 526.
[3] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. i. p. 202. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. p. 350.

that Lord Strangford had possessed no means of meeting the charge concerning Russian agents, and in inducing him to place the further conduct of the negotiation in Lord Strangford's hands. Lord Strangford was told that there were three points which the Czar was anxious to secure, and which the plenipotentiaries of the allied powers considered reasonable. The first of these demands related to the pacification of Greece, and required that the action of the Porte towards the Greeks should correspond with its promises. In the second of them the Russian Government insisted on a letter from the Porte announcing the evacuation of the Principalities. The third of them required the adjustment of the commercial question respecting the navigation of the Black Sea.[1]

Lord Strangford's negotiation with the Porte.

With these instructions Lord Strangford returned to his post at Constantinople in the commencement of 1823. He induced the Turkish Government to comply with the second of the Russian demands, and to write a civil letter announcing the appointment of Hospodars in Wallachia and Moldavia, and the order for the evacuation of those provinces. But, though the letter was written, the temper in which it was despatched from the Porte, and the reply which it drew from St. Petersburg, augured ill for the successful conclusion of the negotiation. The Porte, on its side, was with difficulty dissuaded from appending to its despatch an angry statement of its own demands upon Russia. The Russian Government, in its reply, entered into a detailed statement of its commercial grievances; demanded that a still further reduction should be made in the number of Turkish troops remaining in the Principalities; and declared that a new source of complaint had arisen in the arrest without any trial and without any right of one Vellara or Villaru, a Wallachian Boyard, who had been seized, in the spring of

[1] The protocols will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. i. pp. 598–604; Lord Strangford's own account, in ibid., vol. ii. p. 470.

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the year, in the middle of Bucharest by a Turkish officer.[1]

His difficulties.

The Turkish letter to the Porte was despatched on the 28th of February. The Russian reply did not reach the British minister at Constantinople till the 4th of July.[2] It must have excited in Lord Strangford's heart the feeling of despair which every pedestrian has experienced in scaling a hill. At each round of the road the summit apparently stands out clear before him on the horizon, and only one more rising upland has to be scaled, and the end will be won. When, however, the wished-for point has been gained the pedestrian discovers that the swelling eminence has concealed from him another height still higher than that on which he stands, to be attained with the same struggle, and to furnish the same disappointment as the last. So was it with Lord Strangford and the negotiation with the Porte. Every successive difficulty which was removed was succeeded by some fresh complaint. Every ray of light on the horizon was obscured by some fresh and unexpected obstacle. Lord Strangford, however, did not abandon the task which he had undertaken to perform. He had succeeded in gaining one of the three ends which had been placed before him at Verona. He proceeded to induce the Porte to give way on the commercial question. His success here was again complete. The Porte consented to the appointment of a mixed commission, charged with the duty of examining and redressing the various grievances to which Russian trade was exposed. It signed a treaty

[1] The Turkish demands were twofold:— 1. The surrender by Russia of some insurgent chieftains who had taken refuge on Russian territory. 2. The cession by Russia of some fortresses on the Asiatic frontier, in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty of Bucharest. (See, for Lord Strangford's difficulty in persuading the Porte to yield, Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 378, 387.) Count Nesselrode's reply will be found in *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 851.

[2] So distinctly says Lord Strangford (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 474), and he is corroborated by Mr. Stapleton, in *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 382. The reply was dated $\frac{7}{19}$ May, 1823. *State Papers*, vol. x. p. 851.

with Sardinia allowing the flag of that power a passage through the Bosphorus, and permitting the vessels of other nations to pass under its protection. Lord Strangford had the satisfaction of announcing these concessions to the Russian Government on the 22nd of September, 1823. The Russian Government, pleased at the announcement, promised to send M. de Minciacky to Constantinople as its *chargé d'affaires* to superintend the interests of Russian trade and navigation in Turkey.[1]

His success.

Lord Strangford had thus succeeded in reaching a fresh eminence in the road he was ascending. He had attained two of the objects which he had set out from Verona to obtain. The Russian Government was full of acknowledgments for the services which he had rendered to them. But amidst all his successes the summit of the road seemed as distant as ever. Nesselrode, in thanking him for his services, besought him to complete his good work by effecting the perfect evacuation of the Principalities, and by procuring the release of the Boyard Vellara. The second of these requests Lord Strangford immediately undertook to attend to; and in this point, too, his exertions were rewarded with success. Vellara was not only released, but received a free pardon. Lord Strangford, however, declined to urge the Porte to comply with the first request for the evacuation of the Principalities, unless he should receive a distinct assurance that 'this was to be positively the last of the Russian pretensions.' The assurance which he expected was duly given to him. In December 1823 the British minister at St. Petersburg, Sir C. Bagot, received the authority of the Czar to say that, 'so soon as the Principalities should be fairly restored to that state, in so much as regarded their occupation by Turkish troops, in which they were previously to the breaking out of

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 475. *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 393. The treaty with Sardinia will be found in *State Papers*, vol. xii. p. 915.

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the late troubles, his Imperial Majesty would engage to send his minister to the Porte, and to renew his ancient diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Government.' This promise encouraged Lord Strangford to make one more appeal to the Porte. The Porte undertook to reduce by one-half the small number of troops which it still retained in the provinces; and, as all the authorities agreed in stating that 'such a reduction would render the number to remain in the provinces even less than that of the troops cantoned there in ordinary times,' Lord Strangford closed with the Turkish offer, and acquainted the Russian Government with his success in the negotiation entrusted to him. In redemption of its promise the Russian Government issued an ukase appointing M. de Ribeaupierre Plenipotentiary at the Porte. The summit of the hill was thus apparently attained at last, and Lord Strangford retired from Constantinople on leave amidst the congratulations of his friends, and was rewarded for his labours by being raised to the English Peerage.[1]

Enthusiasm in Europe for the Greeks.

Lord Strangford had reason to congratulate himself on the successful issue of his protracted labours. But the British Government and the Porte were already inclined to suspect the good faith of the Czar. So long as the Greeks were able to continue their struggle with the Porte on equal terms the Czar could afford to stand by and watch the progress of the contest. But the deep sympathy which the Greek cause excited among his own people was almost certain to force him to interfere on the first symptoms of Greek exhaustion. During the whole of 1822 and 1823 the Greek cause prospered. The Greeks at sea maintained an undoubted superiority over the Turks. They compelled the Turks to withdraw from the Morea, to raise the siege of Missolonghi, and to surrender the town of Napoli di Romania. The

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 309, 476. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 396–404.

cause of the Greeks was promoted by other dangers which threatened the Porte. The Persians were invading its Asiatic dominions. The Janissaries, its most trusted troops, were in open mutiny. The very forces of nature seemed in league with the enemies of the House of Othman, and whole streets in Aleppo and Antioch were swallowed up by a dreadful earthquake. Encouraged by their own successes and their enemy's misfortunes, the Greeks persevered in their gallant struggle for independence. Their perseverance and gallantry awakened an enthusiastic sympathy with their cause among other nations. The British Government, especially, was induced to recognise the *bonâ fide* blockade of Turkish harbours by Greek vessels; a subscription for the Greeks was raised in London; and British subjects, roused into enthusiasm by the incidents of the struggle, voluntarily enlisted in the ranks of the insurgents.

It was natural that the sympathy which the Greek cause excited in England should be shared by the Russian people. Russia and Greece had long been drawn together by the ties of a common faith and a common hatred of a common enemy. Russia, moreover, had acquired a treaty right to consider herself the protector of the Grecian people. The Russian nation, therefore, thought that both its interests and its honour demanded its interference in the Grecian cause. Nothing but the attitude of the Czar restrained it from interfering. Alexander, bent on suppressing revolution in Spain and Italy, hesitated to commit himself to a support of rebellion in Greece, and stubbornly refused to draw the sword. The strong feeling of his people, however, compelled him to do something; and, in the autumn of 1823, he met the Emperor of Austria at Czernowitz, for the purpose of determining some common course of action. Alexander was accompanied by Nesselrode, Francis by Metternich, and the two autocrats agreed on attempting

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to mediate between Greek and Turk. Nesselrode, on his return to St. Petersburg, drew up a memorandum on the subject. The memorandum, which was confidentially communicated to the ministers of the allied powers at St. Petersburg, suggested the division of Greece into three Principalities, paying a tribute to the Porte, as its nominal sovereign; governed by natives; enjoying free trade; entitled to the use of their own flag; and represented at the Porte by the Patriarch of Constantinople The Porte, on its side, so the Russian memorandum suggested, might be permitted to retain a garrison in a certain number of fortresses; but the troops should be bound to provide themselves with their supplies without moving beyond a certain distance from the forts.

Russian proposal for an arrangement.

The memorandum was forwarded by the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg to the Foreign Office. Canning thought that there was nothing in what he termed 'the practical part' of it which might not be made the subject 'of fair and useful deliberation.' But its preliminary sentences excited his surprise. Nesselrode alluded in them to the promise of the Russian Government to send a minister to Constantinople so soon as the Black Sea question was finally decided, and the Danubian Principalities were completely evacuated. The Czar, so Nesselrode went on, still adhered to his promise; but he thought it his duty to observe that a Russian minister would renew his relations with the Porte under unhappy auguries for the future if, at the time of his arrival, the affairs of Greece were still undecided. Canning saw in this sentence a clear avowal of the wish, which he had previously suspected to exist, 'to interpose the discussion upon Greece before the establishment of the Russian mission.' Wellington, however, to whom he disclosed his suspicions, could not bring himself to believe that the Czar intended to break his word. The possibility of such a result, however, was not lost sight of by

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the Cabinet, and Canning accordingly expressed his concurrence in the Russian memorandum, and his readiness to enter into a conference with the allies upon it so soon as the Russian Government should have announced its readiness to interpose, in the spirit of its treaty rights and in the character of a friendly power, by sending a minister to Constantinople.[1]

Canning's conditional assent to a conference upon it.

The Russian Government, after receiving Canning's reply, was extremely anxious for the assembling of the Conference. The Russian minister at London continually called on Canning, and urged him at once to enter upon it. Canning consistently refused to do so till the Russian mission at Constantinople had been re-established. In the course of June, however, the long negotiation between the Porte and Lord Strangford was finally concluded; and Bagot, the British minister at St. Petersburg, persuaded himself that the Czar was earnest in his intention to despatch a minister without delay to the Porte. Under these circumstances he satisfied himself that Canning's condition was practically fulfilled, and accordingly consented to take part in the preliminary sittings of the Conference. Bagot, in doing so, disobeyed the letter and mistook the spirit of his instructions. Canning, intensely annoyed at the mistake, disavowed the proceedings of the minister, and gave him a good snubbing.[2] Bagot's mistake was the more embarrassing from the circumstance that the Russian memorandum, which had hitherto been kept private, was suddenly published in the columns of the 'Constitutionnel.' Greek and Turk became, in consequence, acquainted with the terms of the pacification which was preparing for them. The Greeks, who had not yet sustained any serious

The publication of the Russian memorandum.

[1] The Russian *Mémoire* will be found in full in *State Papers*, vol. xi. p. 819; Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 395–419; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 197, 203.

[2] Mr. Stapleton is very tender to Sir C. Bagot. See his account, *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 419–423. For Canning's snubbing see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 340.

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reverses, declared that death itself was preferable to the Russian terms. The Turks, violently opposed to intervention, considered that they were betrayed, and that Russia had no intention of fulfilling her promise of sending an ambassador to Constantinople. Impressed with these fears, they postponed the completion of their own portion of the arrangement, and delayed the withdrawal of their troops from the Principalities.[1]

The end of the long journey which Lord Strangford had been painfully pursuing was now farther off than ever. At the very moment at which the summit of the hill had apparently been definitely gained a new obstacle, higher and more difficult than the last, rose on the horizon. The St. Petersburg Conference, from which the British Government withdrew, collapsed without deciding anything, and Russia still delayed sending an ambassador to the Porte, denying, on the one hand, her positive engagement to do so, and pleading, on the other, the neglect of the Porte to fulfil its own promises.

Collapse of the Conference.

In the meanwhile, however, the cause of Greece was continually becoming gradually more and more critical. Up to the close of 1823, Greece, alone and unaided, had proved able to maintain herself against the Porte. But towards the close of 1823 the confidence which had resulted from success dissolved the bonds which had previously united every Greek in a common cause. Dissensions, with difficulty allayed, paralysed the exertions of the nation at the very moment at which the Porte had resolved on making fresh efforts to crush the rebellion. Mehemet Ali, Pacha of Egypt, had succeeded in modelling an army on the European model, and the Porte decided on applying to him for assistance in its difficulty. The Sultan promised, if Mehemet would suppress the rebellion, to add Greece to his Pachalate. Thus tempted,

The success of the Greeks.

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. pp. 419–424.

Mehemet Ali placed a force at the disposal of the Turks, and allowed his own stepson, Ibrahim Pacha, to take the command of it. During the whole of 1824 the assistance of the Egyptians proved of little consequence. The island of Ipsara, in the immediate neighbourhood of Scio, was, indeed, taken from the Greeks after a memorable struggle. But in other quarters the Turks sustained serious reverses. Their finest vessels were destroyed by Greek fire-ships; their most comprehensive plans were disconcerted by the bravery and skill of the Greek sailors; and the world saw with surprise that a little country, without any settled government, with few internal resources, and with little external assistance, was able to contend on equal terms with the mighty power of the Mahometan Empire.

The struggle assumes a new phase in 1825.

The Porte, however, did not despair of ultimate success. It decided in 1825 on making greater efforts than ever for the subjection of the insurgents. With this view the Sultan's own army was directed to invade Greece from the north, while Ibrahim Pacha simultaneously attempted a descent on the south-west of the Morea. Evading the Greek fleet, Ibrahim successfully landed at Modon, where the Turks still retained a garrison. He at once pushed on to the summit of the range of hills which look down upon Navarin. The adjacent island of Sphacteria was taken by him in May. A few days afterwards Navarin capitulated to the Egyptian commander. Ibrahim, marching into the heart of the Morea, proved the superiority of his own troops to the half-trained battalions opposed to them; and, free from all danger to his own arms, was enabled to lend a helping hand to the Turkish army, which, in the north-west of Greece, was engaged in besieging Missolonghi.

Missolonghi.

The town of Missolonghi lies at the north-west of Greece, near the entrance to the Gulf of Lepanto. Built on a marshy plain, it is capable of considerable defence, and it had already successfully resisted a Turkish siege.

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Its importance to the Greek cause had been recognised from the earliest period of the struggle. It was to Missolonghi that Byron repaired when he devoted himself to Greece. It was at Missolonghi that he caught the fatal fever of which he died. In April 1825 Redschid Pacha, who commanded the Turkish army of the north, appeared before the town. In the following month, the memorable siege began which arrested the attention and excited the sympathy of all Europe. By sea and by land both sides made the greatest efforts to ensure the success of their cause. The Turkish soldiers pushed their parallels with unceasing energy towards the town, and threw themselves at their commander's bidding with admirable gallantry on the Grecian ramparts. But the Greeks met the assault with equal valour. Redschid Pacha, his army dwindled by repeated losses into impotence, was compelled to refrain from further efforts. The Greek fireships, throwing themselves on the Turkish squadron, forced the Ottoman fleet to withdraw from its position; and the bravery of the garrison seemed on the eve of its reward. The successes which Ibrahim Pacha had, however, achieved in the Morea placed a new and more powerful force at the disposal of the besiegers. Ibrahim Pacha, reinforced from Egypt, appeared before Missolonghi in the course of November. The siege, which had already lasted for more than half a year, was renewed with redoubled vigour. Once more the Greek fleet threw itself on the Turkish squadron, and endeavoured to drive it from its position before the town. Once more the devoted garrison repulsed the assaults which Ibrahim made on their defences. The Turkish ships, however, momentarily driven from their posts, returned again in overwhelming force. The Egyptian commander, disconcerted in his direct attacks, drew his approaches closer than ever round the town. The besiegers, secure in their communications, waited patiently within their lines; the

Its siege and fall.

besieged, worn out with famine and toil, saw the inevitable end coming nearer and nearer. A final sortie of the entire garrison, suggested by despair, failed in its object. The Turkish troops rushed into the defenceless town and made themselves masters of it. Three or four thousand women and children, the survivors of the siege, were swept into slavery. The men who had not perished in actual fighting were massacred in the streets.

The Greek cause had now passed through all the phases which were calculated to excite the sympathy of the world. The unexpected success, which had attended their earlier operations, had won for the Greeks the respect of Europe. Men who could contend on equal terms with the whole power of Mahomet seemed entitled to independence. But, if their earlier successes excited admiration, their later reverses awakened unbounded sympathy. The brave Christian nation, which had been on the eve of acquiring its independence, was being crushed by an irresistible force of Asiatic and African soldiers. The sympathy of England had always been given to brave men struggling for their freedom; and neither a traditional alliance with Turkey, nor jealousy of Russian influence in Greece, could subdue the admiration which was everywhere expressed for the Greeks.[1] The British Government, to a certain extent, shared the feelings of the nation; and Canning, in particular, excited the anxiety of his colleagues by his evident desire 'to take a part for the Greeks.'[2] Whatever Canning's feeling

Sympathy with the Greeks in Britain.

[1] It is humiliating to an Englishman to be compelled to add that the Philhellenes in this country had a keen eye for the main chance. Lord Cochrane, who had returned from South America, was willing to place his services at the disposal of the Greeks, on being assured a very large sum of money and an adequate armament. The Greek Committee undertook to raise the necessary amount, but the sum raised as a loan was grossly misapplied. Those who are curious to read an account of the discreditable conduct of English gentlemen will find the particulars in the *Annual Register*, 1826, Hist., pp. 374–376. Cf. Moore's attack on Hume, one of the trustees of the loan, in 'The Two Bondsmen.'

[2] See a letter from Lord Bathurst to Duke of Wellington (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 402, 408).

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may have been, however, he observed a strict neutrality. The Greeks were recognised as belligerents, but as belligerents only; and strict orders were issued to the British fleet to abstain from any act of interference in the war, and to confine themselves to the protection of British interests and British vessels.[1]

The Cabinet, however, had good cause for anxiety. Canning hardly attempted to conceal his sympathy with Greece. The Greeks, themselves painfully conscious of their own approaching subjection, decided in their distress to appeal to the only power who seemed competent to help them. Russia was paralysed by divided and irreconcileable feelings—its distrust of rebellion on the one hand, its hatred of Turkey on the other. Austria was applying to Greece the principles which she had enunciated at Laybach, and denying that insurrection 'by any duration or any successes could ever grow into legitimate war.'[2] One nation alone had throughout the contest maintained an impartial neutrality; and, in that country, public opinion and private aid had been freely given to the Greeks. The Greeks, in despair of defeating Ibrahim's trained battalions, passed an Act placing themselves under the protection of England. Before the Act was officially communicated to the Foreign Office some Greek deputies called upon Canning to state that the Greek nation thought it desirable to reconcile their divisions by placing some supreme chief at their head, and were desirous of ascertaining the views of the British Government on the subject of the choice. The Greek deputies hinted that they would prefer some person connected with the royal family of England; and they sug-

The Greeks apply to Britain for assistance.

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 390.

[2] For the Austrian policy see Canning's vigorous despatch to Sir H. Wellesley, Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 503. Metternich's opinion, quoted in the text, suggests the answer in the old couplet—

'Treason does never prosper. What's the reason?
Why, when it prospers, it's no longer treason.'

gested the names of the Duke of Sussex, the most liberal of the king's brothers, and of Prince Leopold, the king's son-in-law.

Canning gladly took the opportunity which the Conference afforded him of explaining the views of England on the subject. He showed that it was impossible for England to accept the offer of the Greeks; that its acceptance would be considered as an act of territorial aggrandisement on the part of Britain, and would, in all probability, lead to a general war. He doubted the possibility of Prince Leopold's assuming the position which the Greek nation was willing to confer upon him; he begged the Greek deputies to remember that every step which Greece took to secure the assistance of Great Britain compelled the British Government to make some new declaration of its neutrality; and he expressed a hope that the Greeks would not consider it 'an act of unfriendliness to them' if, 'in consequence of the present interview, the Cabinet was again compelled to proclaim its fixed determination to maintain an unvarying neutrality.' The Greek deputies were evidently touched by the Foreign Minister's manner. The immediate object of their mission had been frustrated. But they parted from the Conference with the feeling that the British Government, however disinclined it might be to take an active part on their side, did not regard with indifference the gallant efforts of a distant country to achieve its freedom.[1]

Such was the condition of the Greek question in 1825. More than a year had passed since Russia had promised to resume diplomatic relations with the Porte. During the whole of that period the British embassy at Constantinople had been vacant. Lord Strangford had

[1] The manifesto of the Greek nation offering to place itself under Great Britain is printed in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, p. 108. Canning's conference is reported fully in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 507. Cf. Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 442.

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retired on leave after his protracted labours, and his return to the Porte was rendered undesirable or impossible after the failure of the Czar to perform the promise which he had made. Lord Strangford had, however, performed a duty which the British Government could not but acknowledge; and the intimate relations which he had formed with the Russian Court suggested his nomination to the embassy at St. Petersburg. In Lord Strangford's room Canning selected as ambassador at Constantinople a near connection of his own, who had not, at the time, acquired any great reputation. Stratford Canning, known afterwards to all Europe as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was the son of Stratford Canning, a London merchant, the uncle to whom the minister owed his early education. Born in 1788, he had been appointed in 1807 to a subordinate position in the Foreign Office. He had afterwards been employed on various missions of importance, and late in 1824 had been despatched on a special embassy to Vienna and St. Petersburg. In October 1825 he received his formal appointment as Ambassador to the Porte. No ambassador ever entered on his duties at a more critical juncture. The Porte was irritated at 'the public and incontrollable interference of British subjects in the military operations of the Greeks.' It disbelieved the professions of neutrality which the British Government conveyed to it, and it distrusted the arrangement which, at Lord Strangford's instigation, it had been persuaded to make with the Court of Russia. On the very day, moreover, on which Stratford Canning received his instructions in London the Russian Government took a new step, which made an arrangement more improbable than ever. It directed Minciacky, its chargé d'affaires at Constantinople, to seek an interview with the Turkish ministers; to recapitulate the facts of which Russia complained; and, in the event of the interview leading to no satisfactory settlement, to lodge with the

Stratford Canning's appointment as Minister to the Porte.

Porte a formal protest against the policy which it was pursuing, and to warn it, for the last time, of the consequences which would result from it.[1]

M. de Minciacky's demands on the Porte.

In the interview which the Russian chargé d'affaires was thus instructed to seek with the Turkish minister no allusion was made to the affairs of Greece. The two points which he was directed to press on the Porte were the imperfect evacuation of the Danubian Principalities and the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment at Constantinople of some deputies from Servia. The first of these points was one of those which Lord Strangford had undertaken to settle; the second of them was new. A difference of opinion existed on the manner in which the Porte had fulfilled its promises to Lord Strangford. Lord Strangford maintained that the Porte had redeemed them. It had undertaken to restore the Principalities to the State, in so much as regarded their occupation by Turkish troops, in which they stood before the insurrection. From everything that he could ascertain the Porte had reduced its troops in the Principalities below the number stationed there in 1821. The Porte, therefore, in Lord Strangford's judgment, had fully redeemed its promises; and nothing more could justly be required of it. The Russian Government, however, declared that it had understood the promises of the Porte in a broader sense than that which Lord Strangford had attached to them. It had intended that the Porte should not merely reduce its troops in the Principalities, but that it should concurrently place the government of those provinces in the position in which it stood before the war. Before the war the appointment of police was in the hands of the Hospodars themselves. Since the war, on the contrary, the Beshlis and the Bash Beshliagas, as the Turkish police and officers were called, had been appointed

[1] The protocol of M. Minciacky's conference is printed in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 536. Cf. for his instructions ibid., vol. iii. p. 268.

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by the Porte. 'These officers and police,' accustomed to plunder, continued 'the practice,' and became 'the terror of the Government and of the people of the Principalities.' The British Government was, in the first instance, inclined to agree with Lord Strangford that the Porte had redeemed its promises. Careful enquiry, however, convinced the Duke of Wellington, and enabled him to satisfy the Cabinet that Russia was in the right, and the Porte in the wrong.[1]

The second complaint which Minciacky was directed to make to the Porte had reference to the forcible detention of some Servians in Constantinople. Servia in 1821 had sent some deputies to Constantinople to arrange terms with the Turks. The Porte admitted that it confined them in a place of safety, and detained them as hostages for the good behaviour of the Servian people. No one could deny that deputies brought to Constantinople to arrange a treaty ought not to have been detained as hostages. The conduct of the Porte in doing so had given the Russian Government just ground of complaint, and had almost justified its refusal to re-establish diplomatic relations with Turkey.[2]

The death of Alexander.

Such was the state of matters between Russia and the Porte when Stratford Canning received his instructions as Ambassador at Constantinople. Long before he reached his post a wholly unexpected event had altered the entire aspect of the situation. The Czar throughout his reign had been in the habit of constant travelling. The restlessness which induced him to do so increased as he advanced in years, and during the greater part of 1825 he occupied himself with visiting various parts of his empire. In the autumn he made a rapid journey to the Crimea, and minutely inspected Sebastopol and the Black

[1] For Lord Strangford's opinion see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. pp. 470–482. For the Duke of Wellington's, ibid., vol. iii. pp. 177, 180; and cf. vol. vii. p. 140.

[2] See, for the hostages, Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 540; and vol. iii. pp. 170, 176.

Sea fleet. Politicians fancied that the journey was intended to influence the pending negotiations with the Porte. An order to the officers to join their regiments in Bessarabia, where an army of 75,000 men was collected,[1] strengthened this conclusion. The emperor's journey, the position of the Russian troops, Minciacky's formal protest, all pointed to the possibility of immediate war. Quitting Sebastopol, Alexander stopped at Taganrog, on the shores of the Sea of Azov. A slight cold, unwisely neglected, developed into a serious illness. Signs of erysipelas appeared, but were checked, and the disease rapidly developed into gastric fever. After a few days' illness the Czar became delirious; a slight improvement was followed by grave symptoms; and, on the 1st of December, 1825, the mighty autocrat, the most powerful man in the world, passed away. CHAP. IX. 1825.

The character of the Czar, whose memorable reign was thus prematurely closed, arrested the attention of every political observer. Born in the purple, nursed in an atmosphere of despotism, Alexander was a despot. But his despotism was essentially benevolent. He was the coachman; his people were the horses. He had every desire to treat his horses kindly, but he could not imagine that they had the right to a voice upon the direction in which they were to be driven. Universal despotism was the creed to which he devoted himself in 1815; and, so long as crushed and subject populations were satisfied with submitting to the decree, Alexander's life was probably a happy one. But the creed on which his happiness depended was challenged before five years were over in every part of Europe. Spain, Portugal, Naples, Piedmont, Greece, threw off the yoke which benevolent despotism had fastened on their shoulders. Autocracy tumbled down in every country in which it was not His character.

[1] For the composition of the army see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. p. 567.

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strong enough to stand alone; and, unfortunately, the desire of Alexander to prop it up again with external aid led to differences and dissensions among the very powers on whose will the acceptance of Alexander's creed depended. A fatal symptom, moreover, filled the benevolent heart of the emperor with despair. Autocracy depends for its support on the fidelity of its armies; and, unfortunately, armies had been the agents which had for a time terminated autocracy in Spain, Portugal, and Italy. A grave suspicion seized the Czar that his own army might prove as unreliable as those which had already betrayed their sovereigns; and the suspicion, rapidly increasing, threw him into a state of nervous irritation, which undoubtedly weakened his constitution, and perhaps hastened his end. The dream of despotism had faded into a dissolving view, and the growth of liberal opinion had proved too strong for the mighty Emperor of all the Russias.

He is succeeded by Nicholas.

Alexander had not completed the forty-eighth year of his age when he thus died almost suddenly at Taganrog. The reports of his illness only reached St. Petersburg seven days after his death. The people were praying for his recovery nine days after he died. His death necessarily threw everything into temporary confusion. It was not even certain who was his successor. Constantine, the elder of his two brothers, had a violent temper; and his family thought that the violence of his temper unfitted him for the throne. Like Esau, he had been persuaded to abdicate his birthright in favour of his younger brother. The emperor's consent to his marriage with a Polish lady of the Roman Catholic persuasion was the mess of pottage for which he had sold it. Alexander, having made this arrangement with the elder of his two brothers, communicated it to the Senate in a sealed paper to be opened only on his death. Before the paper was opened Nicholas, who was at St. Petersburg, had taken

the oath of allegiance to Constantine, who was at Warsaw. The Senate, immediately afterwards opening the paper, discovered that Constantine had renounced his succession to the throne. Such a dilemma had never perhaps previously occurred in the history of the world. The throne of the mighty Empire of Russia was at the disposal of either brother, and, with rare forbearance, they both preferred the other's claims. Nicholas, at St. Petersburg, insisted on his brother's right; Constantine, at Warsaw, adhered to his own abdication; and some days passed away before Nicholas was prevailed upon to regard his brother's determination as final, and to mount the throne which was thus unexpectedly presented to him.[1]

Some of the troops declare for Constantine.

The brothers at last settled their amicable difference. But the ignorant Russian people and the ignorant Russian army could hardly be expected either to appreciate or understand the motives which had influenced Nicholas and Constantine. The army, in particular, was thrown into perplexity. At the beginning of December it had been ordered to swear allegiance to Constantine; at the end of December it was commanded to swear allegiance to Nicholas. Some of the regiments complied with the order, others refused. Forming in the grand place of St. Petersburg, in front of their barracks, they raised a cry of 'Constantine for ever!' The personal authority of Nicholas was insufficient to quell the mutiny, and the artillery had to fire on the disaffected regiments before order was restored. The revolt, so far as the men were concerned, was entirely due to the doubts which the disputed succession had created. A few of their officers, it is alleged, desired to avail themselves of these doubts, and to establish, by the aid of the soldiers, a constitutional government. The suspicions which Alexander had formed in the latter part of his life

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., p. 160. See also Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 151.

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appeared to receive some confirmation from the circumstance. A secret commission of inquiry, sitting with closed doors, declared that the firmness of the Czar and the fidelity of the Guards had alone saved the empire from a frightful peril. Secret commissions of inquiry, however, are not the most reliable authorities for statements of this character; and the conduct of the troops throughout the revolt showed decisively that, whatever preference they might feel for Constantine as their emperor, they did not understand and had no desire to secure for Russia a constitutional government.

Wellington is sent to St. Petersburg.

The revolt occurred at the close of the year. Its suppression left Nicholas undisputed Czar of all the Russias. There was every reason to believe that the new emperor shared the opinions and the views of his predecessor; but a change of government suggested the possibility of unravelling the tangled negotiations between Russia and the Porte. It was usual to send some distinguished statesman to the capital of any friendly power on the occasion of a new reign; and it occurred to Canning that the statesman who bore the king's condolence and congratulations to Nicholas might be entrusted with the task of arriving at a complete understanding with the Russian Court. The success of such a mission, however, was evidently dependent on the personal authority of the ambassador; and there was only one Englishman alive whose words would command a weight which could not be ignored. The contemplated mission, in short, could only be successful if the Duke of Wellington could be induced to undertake it; and the king, whose marked consideration for the duke redeemed some of the graver defects of character, would not even allow the offer to be made without ascertaining that the proposal would be perfectly convenient and agreeable.[1] The duke readily assented

[1] The king's letter is worth reading. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 53.

to undertake the duty; and, on the 10th of February, 1826, he received his detailed instructions from the Foreign Office.[1] Setting out at once on his journey, he reached Berlin on the 17th of February, and St. Petersburg on the 2nd of March. On the same evening he had an interview with Nesselrode, and on the following day a very long conversation with Nicholas.

The conversation was succeeded a week afterwards by a much longer and more important interview. To the duke's surprise and annoyance the Czar showed him a note which it was intended that Minciacky should at once present to the Porte, demanding, within one month's time, the immediate execution of every treaty relating to the Principalities, the abandonment of the appointment of the Beshlis by the Porte, the release of the Servian deputies, and the despatch of plenipotentiaries to the Russian frontier. It was in vain that the duke remonstrated, both personally and in writing, against the precipitate action of the Russian Government. The Czar was evidently irritated at the dilatory conduct of the Turkish ministers, and at the excuses which they made. 'Ils nous jouent et se moquent de nous,' were his emphatic words. 'If the Porte is ready to afford us satisfaction, why do they hesitate to say so? Why is Monsieur de Minciacky to remain since May last without an answer? Why is the late emperor my brother's protest to remain unanswered since October last?' All the authority, all the reasoning of the duke could not induce the Czar to abate one of his demands; the utmost that he could effect was the prolongation to six weeks of the time to be allowed the Porte for consideration. With this amendment the note was at once despatched from St. Petersburg to Constantinople, and the duke was not acquainted with its despatch till it was actually on its way.[2] Minciacky, however, was privately instructed that

Russia presents an ultimatum to the Porte.

[1] For these see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 85.
[2] Ibid., pp. 180, 186, 226, 252.

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it was the desire of the Russian Court to avoid war; and that, in the event of the Porte complying with the two chief demands, and refusing only to send plenipotentiaries to the frontier, the Russian Government would not think it necessary to commence hostilities.

The Greek insurrection.

One object of Wellington's mission had thus failed. But there was another part of his mission which was of even greater importance than the reconciliation of Russia and Turkey. Since Ibrahim Pacha had landed in the Morea the Greek war had entered on a new phase. Rumours had reached the Foreign Office from almost every quarter that Ibrahim Pacha intended 'to drive, as it were, the whole of the Greek population of the Morea to transport them into slavery in Africa; and to re-people the country thus depopulated by a Mahomedan colonisation. In the autumn of 1825 Count Lieven, the Russian Minister in London, mentioned the report to Canning.[1] Canning hesitated to believe the possibility of 'so monstrous and extravagant' a plan. Stratford Canning, however, stopping at Corfu on his way to Constantinople, heard a story which unexpectedly confirmed Count Lieven's statement. 'You may remember, sir,' he wrote to Canning on the 16th of December, 'that the earliest operations of this Pacha in the Morea were carried on with some appearances of forbearance and conciliation. Whatever may be the cause of the change, his conduct is no longer the same. If the statements which have reached me be true, he now acts on a system little short of extermination. I have not, indeed, heard of any acts of slaughter committed by him in cold blood; but he seems to spare no one where the slightest show of resistance is made. There is room to apprehend that many of his prisoners have been sent into Egypt as slaves; the children, it is asserted, being even compelled to embrace the Mahomedan faith.'[2]

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. ii. p. 476. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 92.

[2] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 581.

Stratford Canning's cautious statement practically confirmed the allegation which Lieven had already made, and Stratford Canning's report was subsequently strengthened by other rumours. From various quarters it was stated that the monstrous and incredible plan had notoriously been adopted, and was in partial operation.[1] These statements were so circumstantial that instructions were given to the commander of his Majesty's 'naval forces in the Mediterranean to select an officer, on whose discretion he could rely, to proceed at once to Ibrahim Pacha, and to give the Pacha distinctly to understand that unless he shall in a written document explicitly disavow or renounce the intention of transporting the population of the Morea to Asia or Africa, and replacing them by the population of those countries, effectual means will be taken to prevent, by the intervention of his Majesty's naval forces, the accomplishment of so unwarrantable a project.'[2] Captain Spencer, who was in command of the division of the fleet which was stationed in the Ionian Islands, was selected for the duty. He sought an interview with Ibrahim Pacha on the 12th of March. Ibrahim Pacha told him that two Turkish officers, who were present, were sent by the Porte to watch his conduct; that he could do nothing without their consent, and that he must refer Captain Spencer to them. One of these officers thereupon observed that questions of this character were usually treated of by persons accredited by their respective Governments; that the Porte had always been in the habit of treating with Great Britain according to the common forms and usages of nations; and that as, agreeably to these, a captain of a frigate could not treat with a pacha, a pacha could not answer the captain of a frigate.[3] The usual dexterity of the Turk had thus succeeded in foiling Captain Spencer. But the inquiry which Captain Spencer had

The British Government interferes to prevent the depopulation of the Morea.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 105; and ibid., p. 125.
[2] Ibid., vol. iii. p. 83. [3] Ibid., pp. 285–288.

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been instructed to make of Ibrahim Pacha was immediately afterwards addressed in a more regular way to the Turkish ministers. The Reis Effendi refused to answer the question in writing, but he gave 'a positive verbal denial of the plan imputed to the Porte and its vassal.[1] That denial made it, to say the least, improbable that the heartless conduct which Ibrahim Pacha was suspected of contemplating would be really carried out.

The instructions on which Captain Spencer had acted were adopted by the Cabinet on the eve of Wellington's departure to St. Petersburg. The Ministry had, in short, reasonable grounds for suspecting that the Turks were meditating the introduction of a system of warfare which would rouse the indignation of Christian Europe. Some difficulty had already been experienced in reconciling the British nation to the neutral course which the British Government had pursued; and, if the intentions of which Ibraham Pacha was suspected were once known, the indignation of a generous people would make further neutrality impossible. Russia was the Protectress of the Greeks, and it therefore seemed desirable to arrive at a full understanding with the Russian Government on the course to be pursued towards Greece. The greater part of the instructions which Wellington took with him to St. Petersburg referred to the treatment of the Greek question, and not to the settlement of the other causes of difference between Russia and the Porte.[2] The duke reached St. Petersburg under the impression that he would find the new emperor zealously prepared to head a new crusade on behalf of the outraged Greek Christians. The very first conversation which he had with the Czar dispelled this illusion. He found the Czar violent against the Porte for its conduct towards Servia and in the Principalities, but 'more than indifferent' about the unhappy

Nicholas's indifference to the Greek cause.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. pp. 274, 394.
[2] Ibid., vol. iii. pp. 85–93.

people who were struggling in the Morea for their independence. Nicholas had, in fact, inherited the doctrine which had been instilled into Alexander by Castlereagh, and doubted the propriety of interfering 'in favour of rebellious subjects.'[1] The duke left the Czar with the clear impression that, whatever else Russia might do, she would not go to war for the sake of the Greeks. Immediately after his interview with the Czar he had some conversation with Nesselrode. He found to his surprise that the views of the emperor were not shared by or even known to the minister, and that Nesselrode accounted for the opinions of his master by declaring that the emperor had as yet given little attention to foreign affairs.[2] The duke, however, soon discovered that the difference between the opinions of the master and the minister was not attributable to the ignorance of Nicholas, but to the waning influence of Nesselrode. Some secret adviser, whom the duke was unable to identify, stood behind the imperial throne;[3] and the ultimatum which was accordingly almost immediately despatched to Constantinople did not contain the faintest allusion to the Greek cause.

Lieven reaches St. Petersburg.

After the ultimatum had been sent the opinion of Nicholas underwent a remarkable change. Lieven, the Russian minister at London, was summoned to St. Petersburg. Shrewd observers fancied that he brought from London the views of the British Foreign Office.[4] It was at any rate clear that Nesselrode and he saw plainly enough that the ultimatum which Minciacky had been instructed to lodge with the Porte might possibly or even probably lead to immediate war. They saw equally plainly that, if Russia were at war with the Porte, she must, whether she liked it or no, conclude an alliance with Greek rebels; and they therefore very rationally concluded that it was a grave political mistake to profess a cold indifference for

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 149. [2] Ibid., p. 154.
[3] Ibid., p. 194. [4] See Lord Bathurst's opinion, ibid., p. 402.

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a cause to-day for which it might be necessary to fight to-morrow. With these views Lieven and Nesselrode laboured assiduously to prove that Nicholas had been misunderstood, and to arrive at some conclusion with Wellington on the subject of Greece.[1] After a little discussion a protocol was formally agreed upon under which Russia and Great Britain undertook to offer their joint mediation to the Porte. Greece, it was proposed, should become a dependency of the Turkish empire, and should pay to the Porte a fixed tribute; but it should be governed by authorities of its own choosing, and should enjoy a complete liberty of conscience and a complete freedom of trade. Any property which the Turks possessed in Greece was to be purchased by the Greeks; and Great Britain on the one hand, and Russia on the other, in agreeing to the protocol, formally disclaimed all intention of seeking any increase of territory or any exclusive commercial advantage.[2]

The protocol of St. Petersburg.

This protocol was the last important matter which occupied the duke's attention at St. Petersburg. Almost immediately after its conclusion he set out on his homeward journey. His mission had failed to prevent the despatch of a Russian ultimatum to the Porte; but it had concluded the basis of an agreement between Russia and England on the Greek question. In the meanwhile the messenger, who bore the ultimatum had arrived at Constantinople. He found the Turks in a state of exceptional elation. Rumours had reached the Porte that Russia was paralysed by the disaffection of her army. Despatches had arrived from Ibrahim Pacha announcing the rapid progress of the operations at Missolonghi. The Porte seemed on the eve of victory; and the Reis Effendi was congratulating himself on the improving prospects of the situation, when Minciacky called on him and handed to

Minciacky presents his ultimatum.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 296.
[2] Ibid., vol. iii. pp. 246, 249.

him the ultimatum. For the moment the Reis Effendi forgot his customary prudence, and unofficially intimated to his visitor that the demands could not be complied with.[1] But the illusion in which the Reis Effendi indulged was only momentary. The scales dropped from his eyes and the stern realities of the situation were revealed to him. Before the six weeks had elapsed the Turkish ministers had made up their minds to surrender unconditionally. They agreed to every condition of the Russian ultimatum, and to send a plenipotentiary to Ackermann, a town of Russia, situated in Bessarabia, near the mouth of the Dniester.[2]

The Porte yields.

The concession of the Porte had averted immediate war. The Turkish ministers had submitted to an inevitable necessity. The negotiations at Ackermann were commenced in July; and, from their commencement, fresh humiliations were in store for Turkey. The Russians insisted on a fresh recognition by the Porte of the treaties of Kainardji and Bucharest; on the confirmation of every privilege which had been secured to the Principalities; on the political emancipation of the Servians; and on the payment of compensation to Russian subjects for any losses which they had sustained from the depredations of Barbary pirates. The Porte, on its side, merely desired the surrender by Russia of the fortresses in Asia Minor, Soukoum Kaleh and Redout Kaleh, which Russia in the treaty of Bucharest had agreed to restore to the Ottoman empire.[3] It was with difficulty that Russia was induced to yield on this point to the Turkish plenipotentiaries. It insisted, after doing so, the more strenuously on the unconditional compliance with its own demands. Its re-

The treaty of Ackermann.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 275.

[2] Ibid., vol. iii. p. 334.

[3] Oddly enough, *Alison*, vol. iii. p. 251, and Sir E. Creasy (*Ottoman Turks*, p. 507), represent this as another of the demands of Russia. Russia simply demanded that each side should retain the fortresses it possessed—*i.e.*, that the fortresses should not be ceded to Turkey. The treaty itself is printed in *State Papers*, vol. xiii. p. 899. *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 349, for the facts.

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quirements were, in fact, from the opening of the Conference, lodged in the unusual form of an ultimatum; and the Russian plenipotentiaries were instructed to say that any refusal on the part of the Porte, or even any delay, would be the signal for the Russian armies crossing the Pruth. Thus threatened, Turkey yielded. She ratified the humiliating treaty of Bucharest; she confirmed the Principalities in all the privileges which that treaty had secured to them; she agreed that the Boyards should elect the future Hospodars from their own body. She promised that no Hospodar should be deposed by the Porte without the consent of Russia. She allowed the Moldavian Boyards, who had taken refuge on Russian soil, to return and resume their rank and their property. She consented to grant to Servia religious liberty, free choice of its rulers, independent self-government and free trade; and to make Russia a party to the stipulations.[1] The friends of Turkey had traced all her recent misfortunes to the right, which Russia had acquired at Kainardji and Bucharest, to interfere in the internal affairs of the Porte. This right was confirmed and emphasised by the treaty of Ackermann.

The suppression of the Janissaries.

The Porte had given way because compliance had become indispensable. The plenipotentiaries had met at Ackermann in August 1826. Two months before the Sultan had virtually deprived himself of all powers of resistance. For nearly five centuries the Janissaries had been the body on which successive Sultans had mainly relied. The corps had originally been formed by Orchan, in the fourteenth century, out of Christian children taken captive in war. In the seventeenth century its composition was altered, and it was thenceforward recruited from the children of the Janissaries themselves, and of native Turks. Living for war, reserved in all great battles for

[1] Creasy, p. 507. *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., p. 349.

the final charge, stimulated by all the rewards which excite mercenary troops to bravery, inspired with the fierce fanaticism of their creed, assured of wealth if they survived, assured of Paradise if they fell, the Janissaries proved their prowess on a hundred fields. Conscious of their own powers, they ultimately became scarcely less formidable to their own master than to his enemies. On the accession of Bajazet II. they committed various disorders, and, with arms in their hands, demanded their own pardon and a pecuniary reward. Bajazet complied with a demand which he was powerless to refuse; and the Janissaries, deriving confidence from success, renewed their claim at every succeeding reign. For three centuries every successive Sultan was compelled to purchase the favour of this formidable body by rich donations at his accession.

The troops that are troublesome to their own sovereign soon cease to be troublesome to his enemies. In the dark period of the middle ages the Crescent had proved superior to the Cross, because the soldiers who gathered round the banner of the Prophet had possessed a better organisation and better drill than their unskilled opponents. But as time rolled on the advantage which the Mussulman thus enjoyed passed over to his opponents. The art of war was studied with passionate eagerness in Christian Europe; and the Christian armies were moved with the precision which in former ages had made the Roman armies masters of the world. While the art of war was thus advancing in Christian Europe it was neglected in the dominions of the Porte. The Mussulman troops refused to practise the new tactics which modern arms had necessitated, and without which success in war was no longer possible. The soldiers, who were already a terror to their own sovereigns, became almost useless. It was under these circumstances that Mahmoud II. decided on attempting to reform the mili-

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tary system of his decaying empire. The success of Ibrahim Pacha in the Morea, and the failure of his own troops, convinced him of the superiority of trained and disciplined soldiers over a comparatively untrained and lawless soldiery. Strengthening his artillery in preparation for the struggle, he persuaded the Grand Council of Viziers to resolve that a certain number of the Janissaries should practise the new military exercises. The Janissaries, defying the demand, overturned their camp kettles, in sign of revolt, and marched upon the palace. Mahmoud, unfurling the Sacred Banner of the Prophet, ordered the artillery to open upon them with grape. Slowly retiring step by step to their barracks, the Janissaries defended themselves with undaunted bravery. But undaunted bravery was powerless before shot and shell. The Janissaries of the capital were shot down with unpitying severity. The Janissary force throughout the empire was repressed, and the name of Janissary abolished for ever.[1]

Defenceless state of the Ottoman

Mahmoud II. by a horrible massacre had delivered himself for ever from the embarrassing demands of a mutinous soldiery. But the victory which he had gained had brought his empire to the verge of ruin. Russian plenipotentiaries were presenting a humiliating ultimatum to the Porte at Ackermann; a Russian army was bivouacked along the Pruth, in constant readiness to march; and the Ottoman troops—the chief safeguard against invasion—had been shot down in their thousands by the commands of their own Sultan. Mahmoud II. was, indeed, actively organising a new army to replace the troops whom he had destroyed. But the creation of armies is a work of time; and the Russian plenipotentiaries at Ackermann had no intention to allow the Porte a respite. The first result of the massacre of the

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1826, Hist., pp. 352–358. Creasy's *Ottoman Turks*, p. 502.

Janissaries was the humiliating treaty of Ackermann. The Turkish ministers, when they agreed to its disastrous provisions, probably imagined that they had at last relieved their defenceless empire from the danger of a Russian war. Every one of the Russian conditions had been accepted; every complaint which Russia had ever urged had been attended to. Yet, at the very moment at which these conditions were agreed to, a greater danger than that from which it had already escaped was being prepared for the Porte. The Turkish ministers had, up to this time, dealt with Russia alone: they had thenceforward to deal with Russia and England.

While, in fact, the Turkish negotiators had been labouring at Ackermann, Count Lieven, the Russian Ambassador in London, had called on Canning at the Foreign Office to ask about the Protocol, to which Wellington had agreed in the preceding April. For four months the Protocol had remained unacted on. The only person, who had become aware of its provisions, was the editor of the 'Times,' who, within a month of its signature had published the substance of it.[1] A section of the Cabinet, ill-disposed to interfere with the Turks, thought that the questions of the Russian Ambassador were inspired by Canning; and that Canning, in inducing Count Lieven to propose them to him, was really placing a little pressure on his own colleagues.[2] Whether these suspicions were well-founded or no, Count Lieven's question had been put, and required an answer. Canning himself had no doubt about the reply to it. In his judgment the time had arrived when Russia and Great Britain should make a joint application to the Porte. The success of the negotiations at Ackermann would lead to the restoration of the Russian minister at the Porte; and

Russian and British joint action.

[1] The *Times* apparently got its information from Russia. See, for Canning's intense annoyance, Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 323.

[2] Ibid., p. 402.

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the avowed, direct, and cordial co-operation of the British and Russian Ambassador would—so Canning thought—be 'the measure at once the most consonant with the spirit of the Protocol, and the most likely to be conducive to success.' The step would be more likely to succeed if other powers could be induced to join in it; and pressure might be placed on Turkey by the threat either of a 'simultaneous withdrawing of the Christian missions from Constantinople,' or even of 'the recognition as an independent state of such portion of' Grecian 'territory as may have freed itself from Turkish dominion.' The Cabinet agreed, though with some hesitation, to Canning's answer. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Bathurst, who disliked the policy of the Foreign Office, consoled themselves with the reflection that it committed the country to very little. It was not likely that all the allies would consent to withdraw their ambassadors from the Porte; it was not likely that the Porte would wholly withdraw from any portion of Grecian territory. The two hypotheses named in the despatch were both improbable; and the threat, which was founded on them, was therefore empty. Trusting to such arguments as these, they permitted the answer to go; and a fresh step was thus taken in the policy which led to Navarin and Greek independence.[1]

Count Lieven referred Canning's answer to St. Petersburg. The Russian Government readily assented to the views which were embodied in it; the British and Russian Ambassadors at Paris, Berlin, and Vienna were, at once, instructed to bring the correspondence before the Courts to which they were accredited, and to invite the co-operation of Austria, Prussia, and France in the measures on which Great Britain and Russia had already agreed for the pacification of Eastern Europe. The

[1] For the despatch, see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 396. For the objections to it, ibid., pp. 402–405.

communication was accordingly made; but it met with different receptions in the various courts to which it was addressed. France at once announced her 'absolute and unqualified accession' to the Protocol, and her concurrence in all the measures necessary to give effect to it. Austria expressed her pleasure in finding that the desire of Great Britain and Russia to effect the pacification of Greece was in accordance with her own wish, but objected to the measures which it was intended to take with this object. Prussia, pleading that she had no interest in the Eastern question, declined to do more than instruct her Ambassador at Constantinople to endorse the representations made by the other allies to the Turkish Government.[1]

France adheres to the Protocol of St. Petersburgh.

The application to the allies had only proved the impossibility of inducing Austria and Prussia to agree to any joint action. It had secured, however, the adhesion of France to the policy of Britain and Russia. The French Government, indeed, not only agreed to the Protocol, but desired to convert the Protocol into a treaty. Canning at once assented to this suggestion, and the draft treaty which the French Government accordingly proposed reached London in January 1827. Canning was seriously ill at the time. Before he had recovered, Lord Liverpool had been struck down by the fatal illness which necessitated his retirement; and weeks passed away before the new Administration, of which Canning was the head, was definitely installed in office. During the interval the Cabinet were only able to pay a desultory attention to the draft treaty, which French and Russians were both anxious should be signed. So far as the public treaty itself was concerned, indeed, it required little consideration. It repeated the maxims and the language of the Protocol. But the French and Russian Governments desired to add to the treaty a separate article, which, in

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. iii. pp. 270–272.

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the event of a new Turkish refusal to listen to advice, contemplated intervention by force. Canning was disposed to accept this article. One of the last acts of the Duke of Wellington before he retired from office was to oppose it.[1] Had he remained in power it is possible that he would have refused to have assented to it; and that the treaty, which was ultimately signed, would have been drawn in another shape. He refused to serve under Canning; and Canning, relieved by his refusal from all necessity of attending to his scruples, assented to the article which the duke had condemned.

The treaty of July.

The treaty and the additional and secret article were both signed in London on the 6th of July, 1827. The public treaty, which contained only seven articles, pledged the contracting powers to offer their mediation to the Porte, and to demand an armistice of both belligerents. It detailed the arrangement for the pacification of Greece which it was intended should be proposed, and it pledged the contracting powers to seek no augmentation of territory, no exclusive influence, and no commercial advantages for their subjects. The additional and secret article declared that, in case the Porte declined within one month to accept the mediation, the contracting powers should intimate to the Porte that 'the inconveniences and evils' resulting from the state of things subsisting in the East imposed upon them 'the necessity of taking immediate measures for an approximation with the Greeks,' by establishing commercial relations with them, and by the appointment of consular agents. The secret article added that if either the Turks or Greeks refused to accept the proffered armistice 'the high contracting powers intend to exert all the means which circumstances may suggest to their prudence to obtain the immediate effect of the armistice, the execution of which they desire, by preventing, in as far as may be in their power, all collision between the contending

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 610; and cf. vol. vii. pp. 170, 335.

parties.' With some inconsistency the article went on to pledge the high contracting powers 'conjointly to employ all their means in the accomplishment of the object thereof, without, however, taking any part in the hostilities between the two contending parties.' 'Instructions conformable to these provisions' were to be immediately transmitted by the high contracting powers to the admirals commanding their squadrons in the seas of the Levant.'[1] These officers were, in fact, to be ordered to keep the peace. But the high contracting powers apparently forgot that the policeman who is instructed to separate two angry disputants finds it occasionally necessary, in carrying out his orders, to use his staff.

Codrington.

The British fleet in the Mediterranean was at the time of the Treaty of London under the command of Sir Edward Codrington. Codrington, who was born in 1770, and who was therefore in the fifty-eighth year of his age, had done good service for his country in every portion of the globe. He had been sent home with despatches after Howe's great victory of the 1st of June; he had commanded the 'Orion' at the battle of Trafalgar. He had been rewarded for his services by being made a K.C.B. He was selected for the Mediterranean command at the close of 1826. His gallantry as an officer has never been questioned; his discretion has occasionally been doubted. He has the misfortune to have his memory identified with the policy of his employers, and men have judged him harshly or leniently according to their own political prepossessions. The voluminous memoir of him which an affectionate daughter has given to the world has perhaps also had the effect of injuring his reputation. The reader who wearily wades through page after page of irrelevant correspondence forgets that the subject of

[1] The text of the treaty will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1827., Chron., p. 403. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 88. *State Papers*, vol. xiv. p. 632.

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the book was a hero, and only thinks of him as a bore. Lady Bourchier, however, is not the only author who has fallen into the mistake of expanding into two thick volumes a memoir which ought to have been compressed into one little one. Codrington is not the only public man whose reputation has suffered from the pious veneration of posterity. In this respect he is not more unfortunate than others of his contemporaries. In one other point, however, his position is exceptional. He is the only British officer who ever incurred the cold disregard of his superiors for winning a great victory.

His instructions.

In July 1827 Codrington, on board his flagship, the 'Asia,' was cruising off Napoli. There he received a message from Stratford Canning that the Treaty of London was signed. A fortnight afterwards, opening a bundle of newspapers from London, he found that the 'Times' of the 12th of July had the full text of the treaty. His own instructions reached him a little later. He was desired, in concert with the French and Russian admirals, to forward a declaration to the Provisional Government of Greece demanding an armistice. He was told that a similar declaration would be made to the Porte by the plenipotentiaries of the three powers. In the event of the Porte refusing the armistice the admirals were instructed to intercept every supply either of arms or men sent by sea against Greece, either from Turkey or Egypt. In doing so, however, the admirals were to use every care to prevent the measures which they might take with this object from degenerating into hostilities. It was the intention of the powers, they were told, to act as conciliators, and 'every hostile proceeding would be at variance with the pacific ground' which they had chosen to take.[1] Codrington received these instructions on the 7th of August. A few days afterwards he was joined at Vourla, near Smyrna, by De Rigny, the French admiral. Neither De

[1] *Codrington*, vol. i. pp. 388, 400; and appendix, pp. 506–512.

Rigny nor he could make out the meaning of their orders. 'How are we,' he wrote to Stratford Canning, with whom he had been instructed to place himself in communication, 'how are we by force to prevent the Turks from pursuing any line of conduct which we are instructed to oppose without committing hostility? Surely it must be like a blockade: if an attempt be made to force it, by force only can that attempt be resisted.' You are quite right, was the answer which he received from Stratford Canning; 'although the measures are not to be adopted in a hostile spirit, and the allied Governments desire to avoid anything that may bring on war, yet the prevention of supplies is ultimately to be enforced if necessary, and, when all other means are exhausted, by cannon-shot.'[1]

The orders had been given; the doubtful language of the Foreign Office had been translated into plain English by Stratford Canning; the declaration had been handed to a commission appointed by the Greek Legislature to receive it; and the Greeks had assented to the proposal for an armistice. Codrington was impatiently expecting the answer of the Porte to the proposal. On the 7th of September he learned that the Porte had refused it. The time for action had arrived. But the great statesman who had planned the treaty was no more. Codrington had little leisure, however, to reflect on the consequences of Canning's death to himself, his country, and the world. A month before an Egyptian fleet had left Alexandria with reinforcements for the Morea. It had been detained by head-winds in the Mediterranean, and it had not yet arrived at its destination. Codrington hoped by using every exertion to cut it off before it reached its destination. But time was unluckily against him. He had only received Stratford Canning's despatch on the night of the 7th. The Egyptian squadron entered the port of

[1] *Codrington*, vol. i. pp. 417, 450.

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Navarin on the 9th of September. The reinforcements had reached the Morea two days before Codrington was able to arrive off Navarin.

Navarin.

The port of Navarin, or Navarino, on the south-west of the Morea, is one of the best and most capacious harbours in Greece. It is a deep bay, sheltered from the westerly winds by a rocky island forming a natural breakwater. The ancient name of the place was Pylus, and it had been the scene of an important episode in the Peloponnesian War. Demosthenes, perceiving the value of the situation, which at the time was deserted, established himself there with a few ships and a small garrison in a hastily constructed fort. The Lacedæmonians, furious at the unusual spectacle of an Athenian garrison entrenched in the Morea, attacked the position by sea and land. They occupied the rocky island which sheltered the harbour; they sent a formidable army to attack Demosthenes; and they concurrently despatched against him a considerable fleet. The hastily constructed fort proved, however, capable of resisting their assault. The attack failed, and a regular siege was determined on. The Peloponnesian fleet was stationed in the harbour; the Lacedæmonian forces surrounded the position by land. The eyes of Greece were suddenly directed to the hitherto neglected bay, whose importance Demosthenes had had the genius to discern. The Athenians, recognising the necessity of relieving the gallant garrison, sent their fleet under Eurymedon to Pylus. Forcing his way into the harbour, Eurymedon encountered the Peloponnesian fleet and won a great victory. Pylus was effectually relieved; the Lacedæmonian garrison in the rocky island was in its turn isolated; and the Lacedæmonians, recognising the significance of the reverse, sent ambassadors to Athens to arrange a peace.

More than twenty-two centuries had passed since the genius of Demosthenes had been attracted to the solitary

bay, which he made so famous in the annals of his country. The port of Navarin was again to witness an engagement of more importance than the struggle between the Athenians and the Lacedæmonians. The combined Turco-Egyptian squadron was anchored within its waters. Powerful batteries, heavily armed with artillery, guarded its headlands; and Ibrahim Pacha, surrounded by a powerful army, was encamped on its shores. Outside the port, Codrington, with a small squadron of British vessels, watched the movements of his formidable adversary, anxiously expecting the arrival of the French and Russian fleets. On the 19th of September he sent a letter to the Turkish admiral, acquainting him with the orders of the British Government, and begging him to refrain from provoking extreme measures. The Turkish admiral, however, did not comply with Codrington's suggestion. On the 21st of September a division of his fleet got under weigh, and proceeded out of the harbour. Codrington bore down upon the Turkish vessels, determined, at the hazard of a battle, to insist on their return to port. A current, however, wafted him from his true course; and the Turkish troops showed no signs of yielding to the little squadron which Codrington had under his orders. At this critical moment De Rigny and the French fleet appeared in the offing. The welcome reinforcement restored Codrington's confidence, and shook the Turkish admiral from his purpose. The Turkish vessels returned to port. The treaty of July had been enforced without cannonshot or bloodshed.

Codrington at Navarin.

The French and British squadrons were now united before Navarin. Codrington and De Rigny decided on seeking an interview with Ibrahim Pacha. Ibrahim granted them the audience which they sought on the 25th of September. They explained to him their orders; they pointed out to him the folly of resisting them; they induced him to send for fresh instructions to Con-

His interview with Ibrahim.

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stantinople, and to agree to a suspension of hostilities for twenty days. The agreement had hardly been concluded before Ibrahim learned that Cochrane had made a descent upon Patras. Furious at the news, he was with difficulty dissuaded from breaking the armistice, cutting his cables, and proceeding to sea. He actually sent his interpreter on board the 'Asia' to ask Codrington's leave to reinforce Patras. The permission was, of course, refused. Ibrahim had the discretion to avoid hostilities. The treaty of July had again been enforced without cannon-shot or bloodshed.

The French leave the station.

De Rigny had rendered efficient assistance at a critical moment. The French admiral, however, had no fancy for blockading a hostile fleet on a stormy coast, and made an excuse for going to Milo. Codrington was obliged to send some of his own ships to Malta for fresh provisions. At the beginning of October he was, at the head of a weakened force, still watching the great Turkish fleet at Navarin. On the afternoon of the 1st of October, while anchored in Zante Roads, he received a signal that the Turkish fleet had again put to sea. A division of their fleet, consisting of 7 frigates, 9 corvettes, and 19 brigs, was standing out of Navarin. Codrington had no vessels except the 'Asia,' the 'Dartmouth,' the 'Talbot,' and the 'Zebra,' under his orders. But he at once desired Captain Spencer, of the 'Talbot,' to inform the Turkish admiral that he would not allow him to proceed. The Turkish vessels brought to; accelerated in their motions by several shots fired by Codrington's orders across their bows. In obedience to a signal they turned and set sail for Navarin. While they were doing so they were joined by a second division of the Turkish fleet, consisting of 3 frigates, 4 corvettes, and 7 brigs. The entire Ottoman force, at sea, comprised 49 vessels, and mounted 1,270 guns. The British squadron consisted of only 4 vessels, and 172 guns. But the Turks,

notwithstanding this disparity of force, avoided an engagement and stood towards Navarin. The night, however, of the 3rd of October was stormy; and Ibrahim Pacha, taking advantage of the weather to conceal his movements, edged away from his destination and again beat up for Patras. Codrington found the Turks, detained by head-winds, off Cape Patras on the evening of the 5th. He again compelled them to retrace their steps, and drove them before him to Navarin. Several shots were, however, fired at the Turks before the British admiral enforced obedience to his orders.

The affair off Cape Patras.

Codrington, without either French or Russian aid, had enforced the treaty of July, and compelled the Turkish fleet to desist from hostilities. But the inferiority of his force crippled his movements, and subjected him to the risk of possible destruction by the overwhelming numbers of his opponents. Fortunately for him, however, his anxiety was soon removed by the arrival at Navarin on the 13th of October of the French and Russian squadrons. The Russian admiral, Heiden, proved an excellent officer and a thorough seaman; and the combined strength of the allied fleets made them irresistible at sea. Ibrahim, however, foiled in his purpose of assisting Patras, revenged himself on the unfortunate inhabitants of the Morea. Placing his army in motion, he deliberately set his troops to ravage and destroy. Women and children were slain; houses burned; trees cut down; the country converted into a desert; and the wretched survivors, dying of absolute starvation, were compelled to boil grass for food. The three admirals met together on the 'Asia' to consider the possibility of stopping this brutal warfare. They agreed that the continuance of the blockade would be difficult, expensive, and possibly impracticable; that the mere presence of the allied fleets in Navarin would not compel Ibrahim to desist from the horrible cruelties which he was engaged in committing; and that it was,

Ibrahim's treatment of the Morea.

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therefore, necessary for the allied squadrons to take a position in Navarin, and there renew their propositions to Ibrahim.[1]

The battle of Navarin.

'The allied admirals arrived at this decision on the 18th of October. The wind the next day was too light to carry their fleets into the bay; and a few hours' leisure was obtained for preparing for the work in prospect. At two o'clock on the afternoon of the 20th the allied squadrons stood into the harbour. The Turkish fleet had been moored in the form of a horseshoe in three lines, the larger vessels composing the front line, the smaller vessels filling up the intervals between their larger consorts. The Ottoman fleet, in short, was capable of directing a concentrated fire on any vessels which had the hardihood to place themselves in the centre of the horseshoe. A hostile force, resolved on attacking it, would probably have imitated the example of Nelson at Aboukir: have forced its way round one of the flanks of the horseshoe, and have taken the Ottomans in the rear. Codrington, however, thought himself precluded from attempting this manœuvre. Shot and shell were to be the last arguments to which he was to resort; and, though his decks were cleared for action, he was ostensibly charged with a peaceful mission to an ally. Under these circumstances he hesitated to adopt an obviously hostile movement; and stood, with his combined fleet, ranged in two columns, into the centre of the horseshoe. The Turks began the action by firing on a boat of the 'Dartmouth;' the 'Dartmouth' replied, to cover the retreat of her boat's crew. The firing which thus began soon became general: the battle which ensued lasted for four hours. It only ceased as, one by one, the Ottoman

[1] The Protocol of the allied admirals will be found in *Codrington*, vol. ii. p. 61. This portion of my narrative is mainly founded on the letters in that work. The Protocol uses the word 'renewed,' which is, therefore, retained in the text. But the admirals evidently meant to make new propositions to Ibrahim.

vessels drifted disabled out of the action. The Turks themselves during the ensuing night blew up thirty-seven of their disabled ships. When the morning broke the bay was covered with the wrecks of the Ottoman fleet. 'Out of a fleet composed of sixty men of war,' said Codrington, in his general order after the action, 'there remain only one frigate and fifteen smaller vessels in a state ever to be again put to sea.'[1]

British, Russians, and French had all done their duty well. But they had paid dearly for the victory which they had won. The British fleet alone had a loss of 70 killed and 189 wounded; the French of 43 killed and 144 wounded.[2] Captain Bathurst, commanding the 'Genoa,' fell at the commencement of the action. Codrington's son, a midshipman on board the 'Asia,' was severely wounded. But the loss, heavy as it was, was not disproportionate to the magnitude of the victory. The annihilation of the Turkish fleet roused Greece from her despair, and altered the conditions of the contest which she had hitherto waged, almost hopelessly, with her brutal oppressors.

[1] Codrington, vol. ii. p. 91.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Chron., p. 415. Alison gives the numbers differently, but inaccurately. See his history, vol. iii. p. 229.

CHAPTER X.

CHAP. X.

1827.

THE long Administration of Lord Liverpool, which was terminated by his fatal illness in 1827, had from its first formation included two distinct sections of the Tory party. The members of it, when one great question was debated, were free to answer one another; and Castlereagh could advocate and Peel could resist the claims of the Roman Catholics from the Treasury Bench. The good humour which always characterised the debates which thus took place was probably promoted by the reflection that there was something artificial about them. From 1812 to 1821 no one believed in the immediate success of the Roman Catholics. After 1821, however, the growing importance of the question was reflected in the changes which were made in the Ministry. Nearly all the politicians who were subsequently introduced into the Administration were warm supporters of emancipation. The Ministry continued to profess strict neutrality, but its representatives in the House of Commons were almost unanimously in favour of a measure of relief.

The differences in Lord Liverpool's Administration.

The Tory section of the Cabinet regarded this new state of things with considerable dislike. They grumbled at the novel principles which their own colleagues were advocating, and lost no opportunity of interfering with their plans. The marked difference, too, between the views of the two sections of the Cabinet on the Roman Catholic question was soon extended to other subjects. Every day that passed made Canning's foreign policy more objectionable to the Tories. They objected to his recognition of the South American republics; they ob-

jected to his evident sympathy with the Greeks; they objected to the language in which he announced the despatch of troops to Portugal. All that Castlereagh had done Canning was undoing. The Tories, moreover, who distrusted Canning's foreign policy, hated the free trade doctrines which Huskisson was advocating. Huskisson was assailing the principles which they had hitherto accepted with the faith with which they had adhered to the articles of their creed or to the good old constitutional doctrine of Church and King. He had done worse. Like Canning, he had almost insensibly committed them to the policy which they disapproved. While the Cabinet had only agreed that something must be done with the Corn Laws, Huskisson had publicly announced his preference for free trade. The Tories were indignant at the announcement; the country gentlemen were furious with the minister who had made it; and Lord Liverpool, oppressed by the dissensions of his colleagues and the discontent of his supporters, had brooded over the vexations of the past and the anxieties of the future till body and brain had given way under the pressure.

The dis-content of the Tories.

The two sections of the Cabinet were sharply defined. The Tories placed their faith in the Duke of Wellington; the new school trusted implicitly to Canning. The leading members of the Cabinet in the House of Lords shared the views of the duke. All the leading members of the Cabinet in the House of Commons, except Peel, supported the policy of Canning. The Tory members of the House of Commons, however, bitterly detested the doctrines of the front bench. They desired to rally round Peel and to throw over their nominal leader. And the recent election had added to the strength and consistency of their party. They had come back with the confidence of men whose policy has been approved by the constituencies. They, perhaps, naturally considered that a Tory majority in the House of Commons and a Tory majority

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in the House of Lords should logically be followed by the appointment of a Tory Cabinet; and they did not tolerate a 'see-saw' Government[1] which tried their patience by proposing to them novel measures opposed to their immediate interests and the traditions of their party.

Their distrust of Canning,

The distrust which they felt towards Canning was, moreover, increased by the circumstance that they disliked him personally. 'The language of the Tory party,' wrote Fremantle in 1824, 'is universal and undisguised abuse of Canning.'[2] They did not believe in his honesty; they did not believe in his principles; they branded him as a traitor.[3] The distrust which Canning thus excited in his own colleagues was fully shared by the king. George IV. had never forgiven his conduct on the queen's trial. He had been with difficulty persuaded to sanction his readmission to the Cabinet; and, though he had been compelled to yield, he had not given Canning his confidence on public questions. Canning, then, was disliked by the king; he was distrusted by his colleagues; he was unpopular with his party. For all three reasons it seemed unlikely that he would be either asked or able to form an Administration. But, on the other hand, it was difficult to understand how any Ministry could hope to exist without his active assistance. In the House of Lords the Tories were indisputably strong. But in the House of Commons they had literally no representative of weight or ability. Peel, indeed, agreed with them on the Roman Catholic question, but he differed from them on every other subject of foreign, commercial, or domestic policy.[4] Robinson, Huskisson, and even Wynn would have exerted all their weight and all their influence in opposition to a purely Tory Ministry; and the Tories, who flattered themselves on their numerical strength,

which is also felt by the king.

Canning's position.

[1] Sir Thomas Lethbridge's expression (Colchester, vol. iii. p. 476).

[2] Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. p. 91.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 499. Plumer Ward, vol. i. p. 347.

[4] Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 300–301.

would have been cut to pieces by the debating power which would have been arrayed against them. On the one hand, then, Canning's unpopularity both with the king and his party made his appointment as Prime Minister doubtful; on the other, his pre-eminence in debate made it impracticable for any administration to dispense with him. In this dilemma it was natural for keen politicians to suggest that some neutral politician, under whom both Canning and Wellington might serve, should be placed at the head of the Ministry. Three peers, Wellesley, Harrowby, and Bathurst; and two commoners, Peel and Robinson, were all suggested as possible prime ministers.[1] A similar arrangement had been proposed eighteen years before on the retirement of the Duke of Portland. It had been defeated then by Canning's refusal to accept anything except the first place in the Ministry. There was no probability that he would conform in 1827 to an arrangement which he had thought incompatible with his position in 1809; and calm politicians ought to have foreseen that there was no mean between excluding him from the Ministry altogether and placing him at the head of it.

His illness.

At the time of Lord Liverpool's seizure, however, Canning was lying seriously ill at Brighton. He was, of course, unable to attend the hasty meeting of his colleagues in London. He was so ill that the intelligence of Lord Liverpool's illness was only communicated to him through his wife. He was, however, well enough to see Peel on the morning of the 19th of February.[2] Peel and he both agreed that the proper course to take under the circumstances was to act as if they did not entirely despair of their chief's recovery; to go on with the ordinary business of the country in the usual way; and to take no immediate steps for disposing of Lord Liverpool's

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 463. [2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 597.

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office.[1] This decision had some obvious convenience. It postponed the necessity of deciding between the conflicting claims of Canning and Wellington. It suited the temper of the king, who always preferred deferring a difficulty to the morrow instead of grappling with it on the day; and it was a graceful act towards their old leader to contemplate the possibility of a recovery which, unfortunately, there was little ground for expecting.

The state of the public business.

The decision compelled the Ministry to examine the condition of public business. The Government had promised to explain their views on the Corn Laws. Burdett had given notice of a motion for Catholic emancipation. The question of the Corn Laws would properly be raised by Huskisson, the President of the Board of Trade. But Huskisson's policy had so offended the country squires, that Lord Liverpool, before his illness, had been anxious to place the subject in other hands. Canning undertook to bring it forward as leader of the House, and on the 1st of March, though still far from well, he rose to explain the proposals of the Government. The Ministry, he said, had decided to adopt a sliding scale which was calculated to equalise the price of corn. Every kind of grain was to be capable of importation at all times; but

The Corn Laws.

the duty paid on its import was to vary with its price. When wheat, for instance, was at 60*s.* a quarter it was to be imported on paying a 20*s.* duty. The duty was to increase when the price of wheat fell; it was to decrease when the price rose; and the increase and decrease in the duty was to be double the decrease and the increase in the price.[2] When grain was cheap, therefore, the agriculturist was to have the protection of high duties; when

[1] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. iii. p. 301.

[2] For every quarter of wheat, wheat being 60*s.* and under 61*s.* a quarter, a duty of 20*s.*; 61*s.* and under 62*s.*, 18*s.*; 62*s.* and under 63*s.*, 16*s.*; and so on till the price rose to 70*s.* or upwards, when the duty was to remain at 1*s.* For every quarter of wheat, wheat being 59*s.* and under 60*s.* a quarter, a duty of 22*s.*; 58*s.* and under 59*s.*, 24*s.*; and so on.

it was dear the consumer was to have the advantage of low duties. The principle of the scheme had been suggested by Huskisson, its details had been approved by Lord Liverpool, and adopted by the Cabinet.[1] With all their modifications, however, its acceptance by the party seemed doubtful. 'The great landowners had all got together; they were determined upon prohibition; no compromise would appease them. The Lords were more violent than the Commons, and they were all pledged to each other.'[2] As Canning proceeded with his speech, however, the opposition was to a great extent dissolved. The members of it, indeed, did not like the bill of the Ministry; but they were not agreed in any alternative to substitute for it. The debate was adjourned for a week; and the Tories, at the end of the week, were no nearer agreement than they had been at the beginning of it. Bankes suggested that the 20*s.* duty should be paid when wheat was 64*s.* a quarter. But this proposal to raise the price by 4*s.* was beaten by 229 votes to 160.[3] Whitmore, representing the other side of the question, suggested that the 20*s.* duty should be payable when wheat was 50*s.* a quarter, but was beaten by 335 votes to 50.[4] These contradictory amendments satisfied the great mass of people that the Ministry had suggested a reasonable compromise; and, though the other details of the proposal were keenly debated, Canning's resolutions, and the bill which was founded on them, passed the House of Commons without any material alteration.

Roman Catholic emancipation.

Long before the debates on the Corn Laws had been concluded, Burdett brought forward his motion on the Catholic question. Both parties felt that, in the unsettled state of the Ministry, unusual importance attached to the debate. Both of them made the utmost exertions to

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. pp. 428, 430.
[2] Stapleton's *Canning*, vol. iii. p. 305.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. xvi. p. 1082.
[4] Ibid., p. 1122.

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ensure their own success. Lord Liverpool, before his fatal illness, had regretted that the House of Commons should have been asked to consider the claims of the Catholics and the position of the Corn Laws within the same week. He feared that the country gentlemen, while they were speaking and voting about the Catholics, would be thinking about corn.[1] He could not have foreseen that, while they were nominally voting on Burdett's motion, they would in reality be endeavouring to influence the choice of his successor. Yet it required no great perspicacity to see that the marked victory of either party might materially influence the king's choice. Peel himself went down to the House expecting to be beaten, and resolved to resign office immediately after his defeat.[2] The debate lasted for two nights. During the first nothing particular occurred. The discussion was carried on 'chiefly by Irish members, and adjourned.'[3] Early on the second night the debate was enlivened by a speech from Copley. Copley's career had already been remarkable. He was the son of the great American artist, whose works are still admired. Early in his life he had embraced opinions of an unusually liberal character, and he had, in consequence, been retained in 1817 to defend Watson on the charge of high treason. In the opinion of the ministers Watson partly owed his acquittal to the abilities of his advocate; and Castlereagh held out considerable inducements to the rising young lawyer to tempt him to enlist in the Tory ranks.

Copley was easily persuaded to enter the House of Commons as member for a Government borough; almost immediately afterwards he was made Solicitor-General. He distinguished himself in this capacity by his vigorous and successful advocacy, both in Parliament and at the Bar, of the repressive measures of the Cabinet;

[1] Liverpool, vol. iii. p. 453. [2] *Ann. Reg.*, Hist., 1827, p. 55, note.
[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 465.

he was rewarded in 1823 by promotion to the Attorney-Generalship; and, on Lord Gifford's death in 1826, he was almost compelled to accept the Mastership of the Rolls.[1] His earlier friends had no faith in the sincerity of his conversion, and were constantly in the habit of taunting him with it. Early on the second night of the debate Copley delivered a vigorous and successful speech against Burdett's motion. The speech was divisible into two parts. In the earlier part of it he entered into an elaborate historical argument to justify the penal laws; in the last half of it he endeavoured to show that every statesman, from Pitt to Canning, who had desired emancipation, had been in favour of coupling the reform with some securities; and that Canning could not consistently support a motion which contemplated no securities whatever.

A whisper ran round the House while Copley was speaking that he was only reproducing the sentiments which had just been published in a letter addressed to Canning by one Philpotts, a richly beneficed clergyman, who had already attained distinction in polemical warfare, and who was destined to acquire greater reputation afterwards. Canning had not deigned to answer Philpotts' pamphlet. But, when Copley repeated Philpotts' arguments in the House, he persuaded himself that the pamphlet had been written at Copley's dictation.[2] Irritated at what he supposed to be the treachery of a former colleague, and in too weak health to suppress his irritation, he devoted his reply to a merciless attack on the Master of the Rolls. Oratorically the reply was a success, politically it was a failure. It raised a barrier between Copley and Canning; it affronted some of Copley's friends; and it was thought to have cost the Roman Catholics some votes. Whether this were the cause or no,

[1] Campbell's *Chancellors*, vol. viii.
[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 466.

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the Protestants achieved an unexpected victory. At four o'clock in the morning the House divided, and the friends of the Roman Catholics were found to be in a minority of four. Including the tellers and the pairs, 584 members had taken part in the great division.[1]

The defeat of the Roman Catholics.

The spirits of the Protestant party were raised by this success. The general election had given them a majority, and one of the obstacles to the formation of a purely Protestant Administration was removed. Canning had wound up his speech by the declaration, 'If this resolution be negatived, if the House of Commons should decide that the consideration of the state of Ireland is not worthy to be entered upon, then is the House of Commons changed indeed; and it would be more easy to imagine, than it would be safe for me to express, the consequence that may ensue from such a change.' This emphatic declaration imparted additional significance to the division; and those with whom the wish was perhaps father to the thought confidently expected that Canning would at once resign.[2] A few Peers, strong in their anti-Catholic opinions, met together to agree upon a common course of action, and to assure the king of their support in the event of his choosing a Protestant Administration:[3] and Lethbridge gave notice of an address for the appointment of a Ministry which would be unanimous in their plan of government, and act upon some united principle.

Canning, however, did not resign. His exertions in the great debate brought back a return of his former illness, and he was again compelled to lay up in his own house and to confess himself 'disabled at present from discharging his official duties.'[4] He was not able to

[1] For the debate see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvi. pp. 825–1013. For Copley's speech, ibid., p. 905. For Canning's reply, ibid., p. 993. For division, ibid., p. 1009.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 91.

[3] The history of this intrigue, of which the Duke of Newcastle was the mouthpiece, will be found related in Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 466–476.

[4] Ibid., p. 467.

attend the House of Commons till the 26th of March; and even then he was evidently suffering from the effects of his severe illness.

Twelve days before his partial recovery, the king had moved from Brighton to Windsor. Lord Liverpool's health was gradually improving; and no definite steps were taken to solve the difficulty which the Prime Minister's seizure had created. Every day, however, produced a new rumour; and Peel, Bathurst, Canning, and Wellington were all successively mentioned as Lord Liverpool's successors. The king wavered and doubted; blustered to his attendants, supplicated his ministers in turn to support him; assured the Duke of Newcastle that he was a Protestant heart and soul; but settled nothing.[1] At length, on the 28th of March, Canning had an interview with him. He found the king as firmly opposed as ever to any concession to the Roman Catholics, and he accordingly advised him to make the Government 'conformable' to his own opinions.[2] It was easy for Canning to offer such advice. It was utterly impossible for the king to follow it. The rank and file of the Tory party, with the Duke of Newcastle at their head, might talk of the propriety of forming a Protestant Administration; but the leading members of the party fully recognised the impossibility of doing so. The best hope for such a Ministry would have been the promotion of the Duke of Wellington to the Treasury; and the duke declared that he would 'have been worse than mad' if he had contemplated such an eventuality. Peel, on his part, declined even to be a party to the attempt.[3] Canning's advice led to a delay of twelve days; but, at the end of the twelve days, the king was again compelled to send for him, and direct him to form a Government on

Canning commanded to form a Ministry.

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 92. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 472.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 430.

[3] Ibid., p. 461; and Eldon, vol. ii. p. 591. Cf. *George Canning and his Times*, pp. 583, 589.

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the same principle as that on which Lord Liverpool's Cabinet had been constructed.

Peel resigns.

Canning received the king's commands on the 10th of April. A conversation, a fortnight before, had prepared him for Peel's resignation. Peel had frankly told him that, with his views on the Roman Catholic question, he could not remain in office if Canning were placed at the head of the Ministry. The intimation was made privately; it was made to Canning alone; and, unless the words of an honest man are utterly untrustworthy, the unfortunate difference on the Catholic question was the sole cause of Peel's withdrawal from the Ministry.[1] Canning, after he had received the king's commands to form a Ministry, endeavoured to shake Peel's resolution. He failed; and the two friends parted—the one to die without making any further effort for the Catholics, the other to carry the very question which at the moment was driving him from office. Canning, after his interview with Peel, applied to the remainder of his old colleagues. There were two of them whose answers, for different reasons, were important. Lord Eldon was the champion of the Protestant party in the House of Lords; his example was certain to influence a good many of the Peers; and Lord Eldon at once resigned his Chancellorship. He had an excuse for his resignation which most of his colleagues could not plead. He was growing old: the labours of his office were becoming irksome to him; and he had frequently threatened to resign. Ever given to doubt, his habits of indecision increased with his years. The business of his court fell into serious arrears; and Lord Eldon himself became the subject of a bitter attack in the House of Commons. Too old to learn the necessity for more haste in future, too susceptible to bear with in-

His resignation is followed by that of Eldon,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 407. Lord Dalling endeavours to argue that the resignation was on personal grounds. His argument is utterly unfair to Peel's character. See memoir, p. 41. *Cf. George Canning and his Times*, p. 590.

difference the charges of his opponents, the closing years of his Chancellorship brought him much unhappiness; and his resignation, on Lord Liverpool's seizure, was natural.[1]

and of the Duke of Wellington,

Canning had probably expected Lord Eldon's resignation. But there was another peer, of even greater influence and higher rank than Lord Eldon, whose answer he waited with more anxiety. Immediately after his return from the king he wrote to the Duke of Wellington to say that the king had charged him with the duty of reconstructing the Ministry: that both his duty to his Majesty and his own wish made him desire to adhere to the principles on which Lord Liverpool's Government had acted; and that the accomplishment of this arrangement would essentially depend upon the duke's continuing a member of the Cabinet. The duke, before answering Canning's 'obliging proposition,' put the plain question, 'Who is to be Prime Minister?' Canning replied that in this, as in other cases, the individual entrusted with the formation of a Ministry would be placed at the head of it. The duke considered that such an arrangement must eventually lead to the abandonment of the principles on which Lord Liverpool's Government had acted, and at once tendered his resignation both of his situation in the Ministry and of the command of the army. Such a letter must have prepared Canning for the future that was before him. The duke's resignation was followed by the resignations of Lord Bathurst, Lord Melville, Lord Westmoreland, and Lord Bexley. Lord Bathurst resigned because the Duke of Wellington had retired; Lord Melville because Lord Bathurst had left office. Lord Westmoreland's resignation was due to the same cause; Lord Bexley's to a mistaken notion that the new Ministry was to be pledged to a measure of Roman Catholic relief.

and of four other ministers.

[1] Dickens has inserted in his attack on the Court of Chancery, in *Bleak House*, an admirable description of the old Chancellor. Lord Eldon's kindly nature was never portrayed more happily or more accurately.—*Bleak House*, ch. iii.

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Almost at the same moment Canning found himself deserted by all of his colleagues except four. Lord Harrowby, Charles Wynn, Huskisson and Robinson formed the rump which adhered to him.

The retiring ministers probably concluded that their resignations had made Canning's task impracticable. 'Here, Sire,' said Canning himself to the king, 'is that which disables me from executing the orders I have received from you. It is now open to your Majesty to adopt a new course; but it becomes my duty fairly to state that, if I am to go on in the position where you have been pleased to place me, my writ must be moved for to-day.' The king assented to this arrangement. A few hours afterwards Wynn moved for a new writ for the borough of Newport, 'in consequence of the Right Honourable George Canning having accepted the office of the First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury;' and the House adjourned for the Easter holidays.[1] The adjournment gave Canning a respite of three weeks for the completion of his arrangements. He had been deserted by the great majority of his colleagues, and it was almost indispensable for him to obtain aid elsewhere. It was natural, under such circumstances, that he should look for support from the Whigs. The Whigs agreed with him on the Catholic question: they had warmly supported his recent foreign policy; they had made more than one marked attempt to detach him from the Tory ranks; and they had privately conveyed to him an assurance of their support in the event of his desertion by the extreme Tories.[2] The whole of the Whig party, indeed, were by no means unanimous in their desire to support the new

Canning's junction with the Whigs.

[1] An account of these transactions will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xvii. pp. 394–498; the order in which the resignations were received, in ibid., p. 522; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 16–26. Cf. Greville, vol. i. p. 92; Eldon, vol. ii. p. 591; Colchester, vol. iii. p. 482.

[2] The history of this intrigue is given, on unexceptionable authority, in Greville, vol. iii. p. 137.

minister. Lord Lansdowne, who twenty years before had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Talents Administration, Lord Holland, Tierney, and Brougham were in favour of the coalition. Lord Grey, from a marked distrust of Canning, and Lord Althorp, who was slowly rising into eminence, were opposed to it. Brougham declared at the outset that he would not take office, and actually refused the Chief Barony of the Exchequer, which Canning, from a desire to put him out of the way, offered him.[1] He succeeded, however, in obtaining a silk gown, which the miserable jealousy of George IV. had previously denied him; and, in return for this honour, steadily promoted the success of the coalition. The Whigs undertook, at a great meeting at Brooks's, to support the Government without office, but an understanding was arrived at that room in the Ministry should be found for them before the conclusion of the session.[2]

The promise of co-operation from the Whigs enabled Canning to obey the king's commands and to form an Administration. But it was no easy matter to fill up the vacancies which his colleagues' resignations had created. Seven cabinet ministers had retired from office, and their retirement was soon followed by the resignation of Wallace, the Master of the Mint; Wetherell, the Attorney-General; and Beckett, the Judge-Advocate. The Easter recess, however, gave Canning time for the completion of his plans, and before the conclusion of it he was able to fill all the chief situations in the Ministry. But the appointments which he was able to make were far from satisfactory. Robinson, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer since 1823, had for some months past been

[1] Brougham told Lord Grey that he refused it because he could not take it without leaving 'my friends in the House of Commons exposd to the leaders of different parties.' (See his memoirs, vol. ii. p. 489.) He told his friends that he refused it because 'it would have amounted to shelving.' —Campbell's *Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 350.

[2] Le Marchant's *Spencer*, p. 216.

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anxious to escape from the fatigue and anxiety of the House of Commons. Canning's promotion afforded him an opportunity for doing so; he became Lord Goderich, accepted the seals of the Colonial Office, and undertook to lead the House of Lords. Sturges Bourne, who during a long Parliamentary career had filled many offices, who had enjoyed a very intimate friendship with Canning, and who had once been Under Secretary in the department, accepted the seals of the Home Office in the place of Peel. The Duke of Portland, married to Mrs. Canning's sister, became Privy Seal in the room of Lord Westmoreland; and Lord Dudley, who had gained a brilliant reputation in the House of Commons, and who had since inherited his father's peerage, succeeded Canning at the Foreign Office.[1] Scarlett, an advocate of extraordinary power, replaced Wetherell, 'a tedious speaker' and 'a bore,' as Attorney-General.[2] Lord Anglesey, a brilliant officer, who had lost a leg at Waterloo, accepted the Ordnance Office, which the Duke of Wellington's retirement had vacated; and Lord Bexley consented to withdraw the resignation which he had already tendered. These appointments nominally disposed of the majority of the vacancies in the Ministry. But they were not regarded with much favour by the outside public. It was generally believed that many of them were provisional, and they were disliked because they were regarded as only temporary.

There were, however, four other offices in the Government besides those which have been enumerated. The

[1] The wits of the day declared that Lord Dudley's appointment was peculiarly appropriate 'Ses affaires lui ont été toujours étrangères.' (Colchester, vol. iii. p. 538.) Lord Dudley was abstracted and absent in society, and had the habit of muttering to himself while chinking his sovereigns —Palmerston, vol. i. p. 199. Lord Dudley had been offered the Under Secretaryship of the Foreign Office some years before. (Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 369.)

[2] The expressions are Charles Wynn's. (Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 17, 22.)

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Duke of Wellington had retired from the command of the army, Lord Melville from the Admiralty, Lord Eldon from the woolsack; Robinson's promotion to the Colonial Office and the Peerage had vacated the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Three months before, after the death of the Duke of York, the king had desired to become his own Commander-in-Chief. After Wellington's resignation George IV. reverted to this extraordinary proposal, and expressed a wish to assume the command of his own army.[1] It was not so easy for Canning in April as for Lord Liverpool in January to dissuade him from doing so. The utmost that Canning could do was to persuade him to leave the office vacant for the present.[2] Though the minister, however, recoiled from the extraordinary project of the king commanding his own army, he startled the public by reviving the office of Lord High Admiral, and by appointing to it the king's next brother. The appointment undoubtedly did a good deal to facilitate Canning's labours. His position was strengthened by the accession of the Duke of Clarence, while the novelty of the arrangement and the boldness of the innovation concealed the objections to the appointment.

The Duke of Clarence made Lord High Admiral.

Canning desired to confer the Chancellorship of the Exchequer on the Secretary at War, Lord Palmerston. Palmerston at once accepted Canning's offer. Eighteen years before the same offer had been made to him. He had at that time declined it, on the ground that he was too young for the situation; and he had since discharged with exemplary fidelity the duties of Secretary-at-War. He seemed to have attained in 1827 the distinction which he might certainly have acquired in 1809. But a discreditable intrigue prevented his promotion. The king, accustomed to the easy ways of Vansittart and Robinson,

Palmerston.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 645.

[2] He made a fresh but vain effort to induce the Duke to resume it in May. (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 35.)

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objected to Palmerston's robust temperament. Canning found it necessary to break his promise to his subordinate and to unite the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Finance Minister in his own person. He apparently, however, felt bitterly his inability to redeem his pledge to his young colleague. By the king's desire he offered him the Governorship of Jamaica; but Palmerston very naturally replied that he preferred England and the War Office to Jamaica and the negroes. He subsequently offered him the Governor-Generalship of India; but Palmerston's happy disposition was satisfied with his situation at home. He would have cheerfully undertaken the difficult duties of Finance Minister; he cheerfully remained in his old situation at the War Office, and was promoted, for his constancy and worth, to a seat in the Cabinet.[1]

Copley made Chancellor.

The same difficulty which deprived Canning of Palmerston's services in the Treasury also occurred in filling up the Chancellorship. The king had assured the Primate and the Bishop of London that he was determined on having a Protestant Chancellor, a Protestant Lord Lieutenant, and a Protestant Chief Secretary of Ireland.[2] The rumour ran that George IV.'s old friend Leach, the instigator of the Milan Commission, was intended for the

[1] There is a good story, which is worth preserving, singularly illustrative of Palmerston's dexterity. During his long stay at the War Office he instituted a communication between his own room and the Registry. A basket, always at his side, could be drawn at any moment on a given signal into the Registry, and returned to him in the way in which it came. Whenever a visitor called on Lord Palmerston he was always desired to send in his name. The name was at once placed in the basket, whisked into the Registry, and returned with all the papers relating to the visitor's case. When Palmerston had listened to his applicant's preliminary statement he used to interrupt him by saying, 'Dear me! It's very remarkable, but I have your case actually before me now,' and, diving his hand into the basket, produced the very papers. The delighted applicant departed with the conviction that his own grievances had been engaging the minister's attention all the morning. Palmerston's account of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer negotiations will be found in the appendix to Bulwer's life, vol. i. p. 374.

[2] Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 486.

situation.[1] Leach, however, hesitated to surrender his permanent office for a more lucrative appointment in a tottering Ministry; and, after his refusal, one candidate for the post was left practically without a rival in the field. By his great speech against the Roman Catholics in February, Copley had made himself the champion of the Protestant cause. It is true that Copley's declamation had led to an open rupture between Canning and himself. He was probably, therefore, the very last person whom Canning would have willingly selected for the Chancellorship. Statesmen, however, who undertake to form an Administration after they have been deserted by all their colleagues, or when they are coldly supported by their sovereign, cannot expect to dictate their own terms. Copley, to the disgust of his friends who had known him as a Liberal, became Chancellor and Lord Lyndhurst, and Leach succeeded him as Master of the Rolls.

William Lamb made Irish Secretary.

George IV. had forced a Protestant Chancellor on his minister. He had pledged himself to insist on the appointment of a Protestant Lord Lieutenant and a Protestant Chief Secretary for Ireland. He found, however, that in this respect he had some one besides Canning to deal with. Lord Lansdowne declined to have anything to do with the new Ministry unless he was allowed to remodel the Irish Government as he chose. Lord Lansdowne and Canning together were too strong for the king, and George IV. found it necessary to break his inconsiderate promise to the Primate. Instead of Lord Wellesley retiring to make room for a Protestant Viceroy, Goulburn was succeeded by a Catholic Chief Secretary.[2] William Lamb, who was selected for the office, was the second son of the first Lord Melbourne. Born in 1779,

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 482.

[2] The words Catholic and Protestant throughout this chapter are, of course, used not in their strict sense, but in the sense applied to them at the time. See, for the statement in the text as to Lord Lansdowne, Greville, vol. i. p. 96; and cf. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 489.

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he had lived for the first six-and-twenty years of his life with only the prospects of a second son before him. His elder brother Peniston, however, died in 1805; and William Lamb, heir-apparent to his father's title, almost immediately received a seat in Parliament. 'An idler of fashion,' the favourite of society, he completed the forty-eighth year of his age and the twenty-second of his Parliamentary career without evincing any of the qualifications which ultimately made him Prime Minister of England.[1] His friends thought him idle in business and inefficient in debate; and they only partially forgave him for supporting the Six Acts in 1819, and for the moderation of his political conduct. His more intimate acquaintances were, however, aware that his easy temperament concealed qualities which would have made anyone distinguished. A man of the world, who had received a fashionable education at Eton and at Cambridge, he was an excellent scholar, full of information on every subject, and endowed with a passionate love of literature which no cares or labours could suppress.[2]

The king submitted to Lamb's appointment the more readily because the qualities which made Lamb popular in society commended him to his Majesty. Canning, however, was unable to secure another appointment which he desired to make. He wished to reward the brilliant services of Plunket with the Irish Chancellorship and a peerage. The peerage was at once conferred upon the great orator; but the king refused to accept Lord Manners' resignation of the Irish Chancellorship. Canning ought undoubtedly to have protested against the king's decision. Every argument which could be urged in favour of his own acceptance of the Treasury pointed to the immediate promotion of Plunket to the Chancel-

Plunket made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and a Peer.

[1] See Mr. McCullagh Torrens' *Memoir*, vol. i. pp. 22–196.

[2] Brougham, vol. iii. p. 409. Greville, vol. iii. p. 130. Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 140.

lorship. Men, however, are apt to regard their own claims and those of their friends from different standpoints, and Canning gave way. Foiled in his original purpose, he endeavoured to soothe his friend's disappointment by offering him the Mastership of the Rolls, which Copley had just vacated. The English Bar, however, protested against the appointment of an Irish barrister to a post which they had always regarded as an exclusive prize for themselves, and Plunket had to refuse the offer. A vacancy was ultimately made for him by the retirement of the Chief Justice of the Irish Court of Common Pleas, and Plunket was thus provided with a suitable office. But he felt bitterly the disappointment which he had experienced, and he threw the responsibility of his rejection on the Prime Minister. Canning, he thought, could obviously have secured him the Chancellorship; and he was, therefore, bound to have made some effort for the purpose.[1]

The various appointments which have been thus related were completed before the conclusion of the Easter recess. But it was rumoured that many of them—Sturges Bourne's and Lord Dudley's, for example—were only provisional, and that some of the minor offices of the Administration—the Mastership of the Mint, the Surveyorship of Woods and Forests, and the office of Judge-Advocate-General—were still undisposed of. Extreme Tories, irritated beyond control by Canning's unexpected success in forming a Government, affected to regard these vacancies as a proof of the provisional nature of the Administration, and a provisional Ministry as wholly undeserving of support. Tories, indeed, spoilt by a continuous tenure of place, must have been peculiarly exasperated at the appearance of the House of Commons. There, sitting above Canning, the recent

The irritation of the Tories.

[1] The history of this will be found in Mr. McCullagh Torrens' *Life of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 230.

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leader of the Tory party, was Brougham, only recently the most formidable member of the Opposition. The Tories forgot that the change was due to the secession of their own leaders; and that the reasons which had induced them to cross the House themselves justified the Whigs in imitating their example. They saw the inconsistency of Canning's alliance with the Whigs; they were not cool enough to reflect that it was caused by their own defection, and they assailed the minister night after night with the most violent invective.

The first proceedings in Parliament.

The House of Commons met on Tuesday, the 1st, the House of Lords on Wednesday, the 2nd of May. The first sittings in both Houses were entirely occupied with the explanations which ministers and ex-ministers thought it necessary to offer. The debates were warm; but they were cool compared with those which followed them. On the 3rd of May General Gascoyne, the member for Liverpool, was rising to make a speech on the condition of the shipping interest, when he was interrupted by George Dawson, the member for Londonderry. Dawson had married Peel's sister; he had been Peel's under-secretary at the Home Office. He rose to ask whether the Mint, the Woods and Forests, and the office of Judge-Advocate-General had been filled up. Canning, amidst great cheers and laughter, answered 'Yes,' but he pronounced the word 'in such a tone of mingled scorn, anger, and grief that it seemed as if the heart of him who uttered it were breaking with vexation and disappointment.'[1] Dawson had little pity for the vexation and disappointment of his former leader. He immediately followed up his question by moving that copies of the commissions of the Master of the Mint and of the Judge-Advocate should be laid before the House. 'It had been stated publicly,' he said, 'that the places

[1] Lord Russell's *Recollections*, p. 54. *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 505.

were to be filled up by those honourable members who now supported the Government, but who had for so long a time been opposed to its measures.' Brougham, seconding Dawson's motion, defended himself and Canning, and ridiculed the Opposition. Brougham's marked patronage was, probably, almost as distasteful to the minister as Dawson's uncompromising attack. Canning, however, had the courage to express his joy that 'the standard of Opposition' was at length raised, and to declare that such an act was 'worth a thousand professions of qualified neutrality.'[1] Qualified neutrality was the last boon which was to be extended to his Government. On the next evening, on going into Committee of Supply, Lethbridge declared that no confidence could be felt in the Ministry; and, on the following Monday, the fiery quarrel blazed up anew on an intimation from Fitzgerald, the member for Kerry, that he intended to withdraw a notice which he had given for the consideration of the claims of the Roman Catholics. It was evident, the Tories retorted, that 'the Roman Catholics had been sacrificed to the desire of office.'[2] For a moment the hot dispute subsided. On the Friday, Bourne took his seat as Home Secretary. He was at once asked whether he held the office provisionally, and, of course, replied that he held it during his Majesty's pleasure. The plain answer was made the pretext for fresh debate. Lethbridge renewed the attack on the coalition; and Canning repelled it with unusual warmth.[3]

The attack upon Canning in the Lords.

The opposition to the Ministry was even fiercer in the House of Lords. Lord Londonderry, who had made a reputation as Sir Charles Stewart, who had an implicit belief in the wisdom of his brother's policy and in his own ability, and who had just resigned a situation in the Bedchamber, vehemently attacked Canning's conduct of

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 540.
[2] Ibid., pp. 578, 580.
[3] Ibid., p. 743.

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the Foreign Office, and pointedly denounced Lord Dudley as a provisional minister. A day or two afterwards another uncompromising Tory, the Duke of Newcastle, had the hardihood to call Canning 'the most profligate minister that had ever been placed in power.'[1] The expression accurately illustrated the temper of the Peers. Their hostility was the more formidable because the new Ministry was far weaker in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons. In the Lower House, Canning, supported by Brougham and backed by the Whigs, could afford to despise the barking of the Tory pack.[2] In the Upper House, the chief spokesmen of the Ministry, only lately raised to the Peerage, found themselves assailed by an Opposition powerful both for its ability and its numbers. In the House of Commons, too, the Whigs as a body imitated the example of Brougham and supported the Ministry or abstained from opposing it. In the House of Lords the greatest of the Whigs, Lord Grey, separated himself from his friends and joined with the Tories in denouncing the coalition, and in attacking the character of the new minister. Canning had borne the attacks of his former associates with comparative composure; he sank under the calm and telling eloquence of Lord Grey. He even contemplated—so it was said at the time—his own elevation to the Peerage, in order that he might have the opportunity of replying to his assailant.[3]

The Whigs join the Ministry.

The fierce attacks, which were thus made on the provisional nature of the new Government, induced the Whigs to reconsider their original determination and to openly join it. Lord Lansdowne entered the Cabinet without office; Tierney accepted the Mint; and some minor situations in the Administration were conferred

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 707. Lord Colchester says the expression was, 'a profligate minister and an unprincipled man.' Colchester, vol. iii. p. 499.

[2] 'Blanche, Tray, and Sweetheart all barking at him.'—Russell's *Recollections*, p. 52.

[3] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 720. Brougham, vol. ii. p. 481.

on other members of the Whig party. No one was thoroughly satisfied with these arrangements. Canning wished Lord Lansdowne to receive the seals of the Home Office; Lord Lansdowne declined to do so till the Irish Government was remodelled; and Tierney openly declared that the coach must be all unpacked and repacked again.[1] For the moment, however, the Administration acquired completeness from these appointments, and was able, in consequence, to escape from the taunts of its opponents, and to address itself to the business of the session. The session had hitherto been barren of results. No great measure had passed through both Houses of Parliament; but one measure of importance—the Corn Bill—had passed through all its stages in the House of Commons. The Peers had already anticipated its reception in their own House, by appointing a committee to consider the prices at which corn should be imported into this country. The Act of 1815 had allowed the importation of corn when the price of wheat stood at 80*s.* a quarter. The Act of 1822 had permitted the importation of corn when the price of wheat rose to 70*s.* a quarter. The bill of 1827 contemplated the importation of corn at a 20*s.* duty when the price stood at 60*s.* a quarter. The agriculturists, however, were unanimous in considering that 60*s.* was not a remunerative price; and that the British farmer could not afford to grow grain if he were not assured some further protection.

The Corn Bill.

Such were the views of the agriculturists when the Corn Bill reached the House of Lords. The bill had been prepared by the late Government, and Wellington had been a member of the Cabinet which had approved its introduction. Wellington, however, had never liked its provisions; and on the 24th of May he wrote to Huskisson and privately suggested an amendment in it. The duke desired to prevent corn being taken out of bond

Wellington's amendment.

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 96. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 520.

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until the corn previously placed in bond had been entered for consumption, or until the price of wheat rose to 70*s.* a quarter. Huskisson replied that the provision was inadmissible, because it would give any 'one proprietor of foreign corn in any port power to lay a veto upon the sale of all corn warehoused subsequent to his in that port until the price reached 70*s.*' Nothing could be clearer than this opinion. Unfortunately Huskisson went on to suggest another alternative. 'Had your proposal been that no corn, after the passing of the present bill, should be allowed to be entered for home consumption till the average price had reached 66*s.*, and that thenceforward all corn so bonded, or thereafter imported, should come under the regulations of the bill, individually I should not object to such a proviso. But I am afraid that even this amendment would prove fatal to the bill in our House.' The duke probably thought that any amendment on which he and Huskisson were agreed was certain of acceptance in the House of Commons. He at any rate decided on proposing an amendment in the sense which he attached to Huskisson's suggestion. He proposed that 'foreign corn in bond should not be taken out of bond until the average price of corn should have reached 66*s.*' Lord Goderich at once said that the success of the amendment would be fatal to the bill. The duke startled him, in reply, by showing him Huskisson's letter. The House divided. Some of the members of the Household voted against the Government, and the duke's proposal was carried by a majority of 4 votes.[1]

The defeat was as embarrassing as it was unexpected. No one was more surprised by it than Huskisson. He had kept no copy of his letter to the duke, and he was at a loss to conceive what he could have written which had justified the duke's language. The duke sent him a copy of his letter, and he was then for the first time aware

[1] 78 votes to 74.—*Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 1098.

of the careless terms in which it had been worded. He had intended to mean, and his words perhaps strictly did mean, that the provisions of the bill should be suspended till the average price of wheat had reached 66*s.*; but that, when once this price had been attained, 'thenceforward,' as his letter put it, the bill should come into operation. But, whatever was his meaning, his words were obviously capable of misinterpretation. Wellington honestly attached to them the sense which he embodied in his own amendment. Lord Goderich failed to comprehend them; and Huskisson himself admitted that the mistake had arisen in a pure misunderstanding. The mistake, however, proved fatal to the measure. The Ministry, indeed, endeavoured to correct it on the report; but they were beaten by a still larger majority. Wellington's amendment was reaffirmed by 133 votes to 122.[1]

The Ministry had no one but themselves to thank for their defeat. It was due to Huskisson's carelessness and their own mismanagement. They ought never to have allowed either the duke or any other peer to make any amendment in the bill whatever. The Corn Bill was a money bill, and the House of Lords was violating the privileges of the House of Commons in introducing any material amendment into a money bill. No one on the Government benches, however, seems to have seen the obvious point.[2] The Corn Bill was consequently lost, and the Government brought to the verge of ruin, through an amendment which ought never to have been made. The conduct of the Government after their defeat was almost as unwise as the proceedings which had led to it. The Corn Bill was dropped; a temporary measure was introduced and passed releasing the corn in bond; and Canning undertook to reintroduce the bill which had been

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. p. 1238. The correspondence between the duke and Huskisson will be found in ibid., pp. 1326, 1386; and *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Hist., p. 148.

[2] Lord Colchester saw it clearly enough. Colchester, vol. iii. p. 513.

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lost at the commencement of the following session. Instead, however, of submitting with dignity to the decision of the Lords, he was hurried into an attack upon the Peers. 'I can conceive,' he said, 'no species of faction more inexcusable, more blameable, or more wicked than that which would make a subject touching the vital interests and involving the prosperity of the whole community a ground for exciting party feelings or exasperating political animosities.' But, having laid down this rule, he wound up the debate by declaring that 'the Duke of Wellington had been made an instrument in the hands of others on this occasion.' Canning's language was severely criticised in the House of Lords; and Sir Joseph Yorke, Lord Hardwicke's brother, meeting him in Westminster Hall, told him that he would lose his place if he did not keep his temper.[1]

The death of Canning.

The angry feelings which Canning's taunt had excited might possibly have been assuaged if the Peers had known that the minister whom they had exasperated had made his last important speech in the House of Commons. On the 2nd of July, ten days after it was made, Parliament was prorogued. Canning had been ill at the beginning of the session. The anxiety, the irritation, and the fatigue which he had undergone during the continuance of it had told on his constitution. He was too ill to attend a Council held towards the end of July, at which Lord Lansdowne was at last entrusted with the seals of the Home Office, and Lord Carlisle with the Privy Seal.[2] He accepted an invitation to the Duke of Devonshire's, at Chiswick, where it was hoped that quiet and good air might restore him to health. But he never recovered from the illness which was gradually destroying him. On

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 516 For Canning's remarks see *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. pp. 1308, 1338. It is singular that the criticisms of the Peers on Canning's language are not reported in *Hansard*. They are given in the *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Hist., p. 160; and are referred to in Colchester, *supra*.

[2] Greville, vol. i. p. 102.

the last Monday in July he told the king that 'he did not know what was the matter with him, but that he was ill all over.' On the following Wednesday his friends were alarmed to hear that his life was in danger. On Sunday, the 5th of August, the danger was announced to the public. The lumbago from which he was suffering had unfortunately proved only one symptom of the severe chill which he must have taken. Internal inflammation supervened. The unfortunate statesman suffered severe agony; his possible recovery became more and more doubtful; and at last, on the 8th of August, in the very room in which Fox had died twenty years before, Canning passed away.

The news of Canning's death came like a thunderclap on the startled nation. Fifteen years had passed since a Prime Minister had died in England; and the catastrophe which had produced the death of Perceval had hardly created so great a sensation as the death of Canning. All that was liberal in the nation, all that was liberal in Europe, seemed dependent on the life of the great orator who was lying dead at Chiswick; and both intolerance at home as well as autocracy abroad had apparently been relieved by his death from their chief opponent. The utter failure of his short Administration in no way affected this conclusion. His shortcomings were uniformly ascribed to the pertinacity of an Opposition by which it was thought he had been done to death. The indiscretions which had made his words distasteful to his own colleagues were regarded as his chief distinction by the nation. The eloquent language in which he had called a new world into existence, or in which he had defied the Spanish army to cross the Portuguese frontier, had breathed new life into the struggling cause of Liberalism in Europe. An entire nation hastened to do honour to the departed statesman. His friends desired that his funeral in Westminster Abbey should be attended by his near relations and his colleagues

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alone. But it proved impossible to carry out their wish. Princes, peers, public bodies, private individuals, men of all ranks and of all opinions begged permission to pay their last tribute of respect to the statesman on whose periods they had hung or on whose daring they had relied. The streets through which the procession passed to the Abbey were thronged by a vast crowd, which a heavy fall of rain failed to disperse; and, amidst the lamentations of a nation, the remains of the great orator were quietly lowered to their last resting-place among the statesmen whom England numbers in the long category of her worthies.

The formation of Lord Goderich's Ministry.

Two days before his death Canning's colleagues had met together to discuss their own procedure. They had decided to stand by one another. Lord Lansdowne was deputed to go to Windsor and announce the minister's death to the king. The king sent for Lord Goderich and Sturges Bourne, the most intimate of Canning's friends, and desired Lord Goderich to form a Ministry. The task was easily completed. Lord Lansdowne and the Whigs stood by the new minister. Wellington was induced to resume the command of the army. Lord Goderich succeeded to Canning's office as First Lord of the Treasury. Huskisson replaced Goderich in the Colonial Office, and was entrusted with the lead of the House of Commons; and Charles Grant, who had been Vice-President of the Board, was promoted to the Presidency of the Board of Trade in succession to Huskisson. One office alone occasioned the new minister some embarrassment. Goderich desired to complete the arrangement which Canning had contemplated and to secure Palmerston as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Immediately after his own appointment he offered Palmerston the office. But Goderich proved as incapable as Canning of redeeming the pledge which he had thus given. The king, intent on building palaces in London and on making fresh

improvements at Windsor, was anxious to have 'a creature of his own at the Exchequer.'[1] The 'fittest man in England for the office,' according to the king's estimation of fitness, was Herries. Herries had been private secretary years before to Vansittart; he had subsequently acted as private secretary to Perceval. He had been rewarded for his services by the Auditorship of the Civil List, a situation to which the substantial remuneration of 1,400*l.* a year was attached; and in 1820 he had been promoted to the Secretaryship of the Treasury. Sitting with Canning for Harwich,[2] enjoying Goderich's confidence in the Treasury, he had gained the friendship of both of these ministers; but he had acquired no Parliamentary distinction which justified his promotion. He either believed or affected to regard himself unequal to the high office which was thrust on him. He professed his readiness to accept a subordinate situation in the Ministry, and only yielded at the personal intervention of the king.[3]

Herries.

The king's preference had apparently secured the Chancellorship of the Exchequer for Herries; but the mere announcement of the king's intention raised a storm of opposition among the Whig members of the Cabinet.

[1] See the account told by Lord Palmerston himself in Bulwer's life, appendix, vol. i. At the Council at which Herries was appointed to the Exchequer the architect of Windsor Castle applied to him for 15,000*l.* for the Round Tower. The metropolitan improvements in progress at the time were well summed up by Lord Colchester: 'The king's new palace on the site of Buckingham House is covered in; Carlton House has nearly disappeared; and the new terrace of houses towards the Mall is rising rapidly. The grass part of St. James's Park is to be laid out in shrubberies, like Regent's Park. New gateways colonnaded are already built at Hyde Park Corner, leading on one side by the king's garden into Constitution Hill, and on the other side of the Duke of Wellington's house into Hyde Park. A new bridge of five arches has been thrown across the Serpentine, at the end nearest Kensington Gardens; and a new carriage drive has been made round the whole of the Park north of the Serpentine.—Colchester, vol. iii. p. 522. Cf. Greville, vol. i. p. 108.

[2] Canning sat for Harwich from 1823 to 1826; for Newport from 1826 to his acceptance of the Treasury, and thenceforward for Seaford.

[3] The story of this intrigue is told in Bulwer's *Palmerston*, appendix, vol. i. p. 378; Greville, vol. i. p. 112; and Colchester, vol. iii. p. 524.

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His appointment to the Exchequer.

The Whigs objected to the appointment of 'a Tory clerk' to the Exchequer; they differed from Herries' views; they disliked the circumstances under which the appointment was made; and they insisted on the reconsideration of the arrangement. The annoyance of the Whigs was the greater because they had desired Lord Holland's admission to the Cabinet, and the king refused to avail himself of Lord Holland's services. The Whigs, under these circumstances, became so angry that they threatened to leave the Ministry in a body; and the quarrel was only temporarily arranged by Goderich going down to Windsor and obtaining a temporary postponement of Herries' appointment. Huskisson, since the conclusion of the session, had been travelling on the Continent. A special messenger had been sent to him with the particulars of Canning's death, and with the offer of the Colonial Office; and the distracted Cabinet decided on letting Herries' appointment rest till Huskisson's return. In the meanwhile a paragraph was sent to the newspapers, which had announced Herries' promotion, to explain that the appointment had not been definitely made. For a few days the newspapers joined in a chorus of praise of the Tory clerk, so loud and so unmeasured in its strain as to suggest a doubt of its sincerity. 'Courier,' 'Post,' 'Times,' 'New Times,' 'Sun,' and 'Herald' inserted their little paragraphs in praise of the minister designate. The Funds, it was stated, fell on the mere rumour that Herries had declined the office; the City recovered its complacency on a report that he had accepted it. George IV.'s declaration that the Tory clerk was the fittest man in England for the office was almost justified by the language of the Press.

The praise was probably overdone; the reaction was suddenly coming. Towards the end of August a newspaper hinted that Herries was connected with a great capitalist, the arbiter of the European exchanges. The

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'Chronicle' immediately denounced the connection, and declared that it disqualified Herries for the Exchequer. The 'Courier' contradicted the 'Chronicle;' the 'Chronicle' replied to the 'Courier;' and for a week people thought of nothing but the acquaintance of Herries with Rothschild. The 'Times,' which was supposed to favour the Whig section of the Cabinet, threw its weight into the scale against Herries, reserving its article for the very day on which Huskisson reached England. Huskisson required, however, very little encouragement to induce him to oppose the appointment; and his language was so firm that the king was persuaded to reconsider the contemplated arrangement. George IV. suggested that Huskisson should take the Exchequer. But Huskisson preferred the quiet of the Colonial Office. Sturges Bourne and Tierney, to whom the Exchequer was subsequently offered, also shrank from the responsibilities of the office. The king thereupon fell back upon Herries. Lord Lansdowne resigned, but withdrew his resignation; and the world was assured that the Ministry was complete, and that 'the fittest man in England' had accepted the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.[1]

Dissensions in the Ministry.

The difference had been settled; but its history augured ill for the future of the Ministry. Herries was 'nettled by the attacks made upon him;' the Whigs were 'sick to death of their situation and anxious to resign.' Everyone was uncomfortable; and the Prime Minister was more uncomfortable than any of his colleagues. His unfitness for his situation was already evident; and every section of his Administration agreed in denouncing his weakness.[2] For a few weeks, however, everything went

[1] The history of this strange intrigue will be found in the newspapers of the day, which are worth referring to. See also Greville, vol. i. pp. 108–113; Palmerston, vol. i. p. 197, and appendix, p. 378; and Mr. McCullagh Torrens' *Life of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 236. Lord Lansdowne's resignation is mentioned in the *Times* of the 3rd of September.

[2] Greville, vol. i. pp. 110, 111.

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on smoothly. The ministers, scattered about the country, enjoying their holiday, had no opportunity for quarrelling. During the whole of September and October Goderich remained in comparative peace. At the commencement of November, however, ministers began to return to town. Tierney, Huskisson, and Herries were all at their offices; and Tierney took occasion to speak to Goderich about the future of the Ministry. In the previous session Canning had announced his intention to nominate a finance committee to inquire into the condition of the revenue. Tierney suggested that Althorp should be asked to take the chair of this committee. Goderich mentioned the matter to Huskisson, as leader of the House of Commons; and, as Huskisson agreed with Tierney, Tierney undertook to sound Lord Spencer, Althorp's father, as to the probability of his son's accepting the duty. Althorp conditionally accepted the chairmanship; and it then occurred to Lord Goderich to inquire whether Herries was acquainted with the negotiation. He was distressed to learn that no one had thought of consulting 'the fittest man in England' about the propriety of the appointment, and he advised Huskisson to take some opportunity of doing so. The desired opportunity soon occurred. On the 28th of November Herries happened to call on Huskisson at the Colonial Office, and he then learned for the first time that some kind of negotiation had been going on with Althorp. He at once objected to the proposed appointment, and, on the next day, sought an interview with Goderich, and remonstrated with him on the slighting manner in which he himself had been treated. Goderich expressed his regret at the occurrence. Huskisson subsequently followed Goderich's example, and told Herries that he had written to Tierney to stop any further proceedings. Herries fancied that Huskisson had deferred to his remonstrance, and was pacified by this opinion.

A disagreeable quarrel had proved the hollowness of

the truce between the two sections of the Government. But a more serious difference of opinion was at the same time threatening the disruption of the Ministry. The battle of Navarin had been fought; and the Cabinet were not agreed upon the measures to be taken in consequence. Some of them were suspected of a desire to censure Codrington; others of them were credited with a wish to let matters take their course, and to allow Russia to extort Greek independence from the Porte. The king, sensible of the divisions of the Ministry, took the patronage of the State into his own hands, and distributed honours to the fleet without even consulting his advisers. Conscious of their humiliating position, the Ministry decided that they could not go on without additional strength; and on the 8th of December Goderich personally urged the king to admit Lord Holland and Lord Wellesley into the Cabinet. The king refused; and, on the following Tuesday, Goderich, repeating his advice in a letter, begged leave, unless it were adopted, to retire. Lansdowne and Huskisson saw the letter which Goderich had written, and professed their readiness to abide by his decision. The Prime Minister, however, after showing the letter to his colleagues, added a postscript on his own account, pleading domestic circumstances as the reason for his resignation. The king, with much dexterity, treated the postscript as the letter; and, expressing his regret at the domestic reasons which necessitated Goderich's retirement, sent for Lord Harrowby. Lord Harrowby at once refused the dignity which the king thrust upon him; and Goderich, in consequence, consented to remain in office. The town had hardly recovered from its surprise on learning that Lord Harrowby had been sent for, when it was astonished to learn that Goderich had resumed his situation.[1]

which are aggravated by the news of Navarin.

[1] The best account of this will be found in Palmerston's letter of 18th December to his brother (Palmerston, vol. i. p. 207).

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The Ministry falls.

Herries had naturally neglected his own personal grievance while the Government was on the eve of dissolution; he reverted to it on the restoration of Goderich to power. On the 21st of December, two days after the Prime Minister's resumption of office, he wrote to Goderich to say that it was 'time that some steps should be taken with respect to the Committee of Finance;' that he objected to Lord Althorp's appointment, both on public and private grounds; and that he was ready to relieve his chief from the difficulty by the cheerful resignation of his office. Goderich promised to see Huskisson on the subject. Huskisson, however, was out of town. He did not return to London till the 27th of December; and Goderich had no opportunity of seeing him before the following day. Huskisson declined to give way to Herries, and distinctly assured the Prime Minister that he intended to retire from office, if Lord Althorp were not appointed chairman of the Finance Committee. Goderich, finding it impossible to shake Huskisson's determination, again appealed to Herries. But Herries was as inexorable as Huskisson. Goderich could get nothing out of him but a constant reference to the ultimatum in his letter. '"Pray do not resign," said the noble lord at the head of affairs. "My letter of the 21st of December," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer. "But I am agitated beyond measure," said the noble lord. "My letter of the 21st of December," continued the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The noble lord pleaded almost in tears; but still the stony-hearted Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed to his letter of the 21st of December.'[1] Utterly unable to reconcile his colleagues, Goderich went down to Windsor and stated the matter to the king. George IV., for once in his life, knew his own

Cf. also Greville, vol. i. p. 116, and Torrens' *Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 299.

[1] See Brougham's amusing description of the negotiation (*Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 553). Huskisson's explanation will be found in ibid., p. 463; Herries', ibid., p. 487; Goderich's, ibid., p. 272.

mind. Properly indignant with the weak minister, who had brought the Government into disrepute, he told him 'to go home and take care of himself,' and send the Chancellor to him. 'Goody Goderich'—so the world laughingly declared—began to cry, and 'his Majesty offered him his pocket-handkerchief.'[1]

The Duke of Wellington forms a new Government,

So ended the weakest Administration of the present century. Goderich had furnished one more example of the truth that an admirable lieutenant may prove an incapable chief, and had fallen a victim to his fear of responsibility. By the Chancellor's advice the king immediately sent for Wellington, and desired him to form a Government. The duke inquired whether George IV. attached any conditions to the duty; and was assured that he was free to apply to anyone except Lord Grey; 'that the Roman Catholic question was not to be made a Cabinet question;' and 'that there was to be a Protestant Lord Chancellor, a Protestant Lord Lieutenant, and a Protestant Lord Chancellor in Ireland.'[2] The duke, after receiving these instructions, applied to Peel. Peel thought it impossible to form an efficient Ministry from the extreme Tories, and advised, therefore, an attempt to secure the co-operation of Canning's friends. The attempt was made; but its success was, for some time, doubtful. The Whigs endeavoured to dissuade Huskisson from rejoining the Tories. The Tories offered him excellent terms for his assistance. His own presence at the Colonial Office; Lord Dudley's at the Foreign Office; Grant's at the Board of Trade; Palmerston's assistance in the Cabinet; and Lamb's continuance in the Irish office might be taken as a guarantee that an impartial system would be pursued towards the Catholics. Huskisson was satisfied with these terms, and consented to take part in the new Administration.

and is joined by Huskisson,

[1] Palmerston, vol. i. p. 212; Greville, vol. i. p. 120; Colchester, vol. iii. p. 540.

[2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 12.

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Huskisson's assistance made Wellington's task comparatively easy. Five members of the Goderich Cabinet—Lyndhurst, Dudley, Huskisson, Grant, and Palmerston—retained their old offices. The duke himself took the Treasury; Peel returned to the Home Office; Lord Bathurst became President of the Council; Goulburn replaced Herries at the Exchequer; and Herries was consoled with the Mastership of the Mint. Lord Anglesey succeeded Lord Wellesley as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and Wetherell replaced Scarlett as Attorney-General. By these appointments the Ministry secured considerable debating power in the House of Commons; but they desired to obtain additional aid in the House of Lords. Poor Charles Wynn had, for more than five years, discharged the duties of the India Board. During that period he had been consulted by few of his colleagues and feared by none of them. He had been regarded as the representative of the Duke of Buckingham, and submitted to, in consequence, as an inevitable evil. Unfortunately for Wynn, some difference arose between his noble relative and himself.[1] The duke, who was insatiable in his demands for high office, thought that Wynn stood in his way. An estrangement ensued between the two, of which the Duke of Wellington was perfectly aware. Wynn, in consequence, found himself left out in the cold, and was dismissed from the India Board with very little ceremony. He was replaced by Lord Melville. Wellington at the same time availed himself of the services of two more useful auxiliaries. Lord Aberdeen had already acquired some little distinction in the political and literary world. Educated at Harrow, the schoolfellow of Byron, he had been immortalised in the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' as 'the travelled thane, Athenian Aberdeen.' He had been entrusted in 1813 with a

[1] Buckingham's *Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. pp. 144, 180; Duke of Wellington's *Despatches*, vol. iii. p. 589.

mission to Vienna, and had secured the adhesion of Austria to the Treaty of Toplitz. He became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Lord Ellenborough was the eldest son of the great judge, whose extreme prejudices and extraordinary ability invested his tenure of the Chief Justiceship with peculiar interest. The son had already displayed in debate the eloquence and capacity which afterwards made him one of the most powerful speakers in the House of Lords. He became Lord Privy Seal.

and by Lord Aberdeen and Ellenborough.

Wellington had succeeded in obeying the king's commands and in forming an Administration. But the new Cabinet was assailed with abuse from almost every quarter. The old Tory party had been wild with delight at the restoration of Wellington and Peel to power; but their pleasure was damped by the admission of Huskisson to the Cabinet and the exclusion of Lord Eldon from it. 'Any Ministry,' wrote the Duke of Newcastle, 'which excludes Lord Eldon and includes Mr. Huskisson cannot gain my confidence.' 'It grieves me to think,' wrote Lord Sidmouth, 'that an opportunity of forming an Administration which would have given entire satisfaction to the country has been lost. The admissions and the omissions are deeply to be deplored.' Lord Eldon himself was hurt at the neglect of his friends, and declared that the Ministry was 'better than the last, but not what was wished and expected.'[1] The annoyance of the Whigs, however, was far greater than that of the extreme Tories. The Whigs declared that the appointment of a military Prime Minister was unconstitutional;[2] they complained that Huskisson had betrayed them; Canning's widow, Lady Canning, considered that he had outraged her husband's memory. 'The part of the transaction which will appear extraordinary,' wrote Greville, 'is that the Government

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 542, 543. *Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 33. Cf. also Duke of Newcastle's letter to Duke of Wellington, in Wellington's *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 257.

[2] See Brougham's speech (*Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 56).

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having been broken up by a quarrel between Huskisson and Herries, the opposite party come in, and both these ministers remain with them. In private life the transaction would look very like a fraud, and be open to great suspicion.'[1]

Attack upon Huskisson.

In the midst of the ferment which thus existed Huskisson had to seek re-election from his Liverpool constituents. Nettled by the attacks upon him, he was driven into a justification of his conduct. 'He had insisted on receiving, and had received, from the Duke of Wellington' —so, at least, he was reported to have said—'positive and special pledges that a particular line of policy should be followed, and that his Grace should tread in all respects in the footsteps of Mr. Canning.'[2] These words, uttered in the heated atmosphere of a popular election, were regarded as a declaration that Huskisson had demanded and obtained a guarantee for the future policy of the Ministry. People who had been present when the speech was made declared that the words which Huskisson had used were much stronger than those attributed to him in the reports; and everyone believed that he had said that 'the Duke of Wellington had acceded to his stipulation for the continuance of the system of free trade' and of Canning's foreign policy.[3] It was natural that such unguarded remarks should attract attention in both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Commons Huskisson found it necessary to explain away the meaning of his words. In the House of Lords the Duke of Wellington thought fit to deny the accuracy of the statement. 'If my right honourable friend,' he said, 'had entered into any such corrupt bargain as he was represented to describe, he would have tarnished his own fame as much as I should have disgraced mine.'

[1] Greville, vol. i. pp. 123, 125, 127. Cf. Buckingham's *George IV.*, vol. ii p. 363.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 13. The passage was toned down for publication in Huskisson's *Speeches*, vol. iii. p. 679.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 545, 547.

A misunderstanding of this description, at the very outset, augured ill for the future harmony of the Administration. The rock, however, on which the Goderich Cabinet had been broken was discreetly avoided. Peel took the nomination of the Finance Committee into his own hands, put the leading members of all parties upon it, carried their appointment without material opposition, and placed Sir H. Parnell, an Irish member with liberal views and a considerable knowledge of finance, in the chair.[1] But the appointment of the Finance Committee was one of the simplest questions which the Ministry had before it. Many other matters, in which the public felt a greater interest, were waiting for a settlement. Early in 1827 a private member, of little influence, unexpectedly raised a dormant question. For the best part of a century the Dissenters had passively submitted to the anomalous position in which they had been placed by the Legislature. Nominally unable to hold any office under the Crown, they were annually 'whitewashed' for their infringement of the law by the passage of an Indemnity Act. The Dissenters had hitherto been assenting parties to this policy. They fancied that the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts would logically lead to the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, and they preferred remaining under a disability themselves to running the risk of conceding relief to others.

The Dissenters.

The tacit understanding, which thus existed between the Church on the one side and Dissent on the other, was maintained unbroken and almost unchallenged till 1827. It was challenged in that year by William Smith, the member for Norwich. Smith was a London banker; he was a Dissenter; and he felt keenly the 'hard, unjust, and unnecessary' law which disabled him from holding 'any office, however insignificant,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p 448.

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under the Crown,' and from sitting 'as a magistrate in any corporation without violating his conscience.' Smith took the opportunity which the annual Indemnity Act afforded him of stating these views in the House of Commons. As he spoke the scales fell from the eyes of the Liberal members. The moment he sat down Harvey, the member for Colchester, twitted the Opposition with disregarding 'the substantial claims of the Dissenters,' while those of the Catholics were urged year after year 'with the vehemence of party,' and supported by 'the mightiest powers of energy and eloquence.' The taunt called up Lord John Russell, and elicited from him the declaration that he would bring forward a motion on the Test and Corporation Acts, 'if the Protestant Dissenters should think it to their interest that he should do so.'[1]

The Test and Corporation Acts.

A year afterwards—on the 26th of February, 1828—Lord John Russell rose to redeem the promise which he thus gave. He rested his case on the great principle that 'every man ought to be allowed to form his religious opinions by the impressions on his own mind, and that, when so formed, he should be at liberty to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, without being subjected to any penalty or disqualification whatever.' He characterised the Indemnity Act as an Act 'passed yearly to forgive good men for doing good service to their country;' and he showed that the conditions under which the Act had been originally passed were entirely altered.[2] Lord John Russell found his chief opponent in Sir Robert Inglis, an English baronet, representing an Irish constituency, who, from ability in debate and from his narrow views on religious subjects, was already becoming a champion designate of the Church party. Inglis declared that he resisted the motion because he believed that its success would be the forerunner of

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xvii. pp. 12–19.

[2] Lord J. Russell's speech will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 676.

further attacks upon the Church. 'I prefer that the contest should still continue about the outworks, and that we should not surrender them, because I am too sure that in that case we should have to fight for the citadel.' The debate thus commenced continued throughout the night. The Canningite section of the Ministry voted with the rest of their colleagues, on the ground that the Test and Corporation Acts 'had virtually and practically been repealed.' Notwithstanding this support, however, the Ministry were beaten by a large majority. 'Many attached friends of the Established Church—Lord Sandon and Sir Thomas Acland,' for example—voted against them, and Lord John Russell's motion was carried by 237 votes to 193.[1]

Peel proposes a compromise,

The Ministry had sustained a crushing and unexpected reverse. For the moment it was doubtful whether it could continue in office. It was saved from the necessity of resigning by the moderation and dexterity of Peel. Peel considered that nothing could be more unfortunate for the Church than to involve the House of Commons in a conflict with the House of Lords on a religious question; and that an earnest effort should be made to induce the highest ecclesiastical authorities cheerfully and voluntarily to acquiesce in measures which were calculated to conciliate the good will of the Dissenters. On his advice the Bishops consented to substitute a formal declaration for the test hitherto in force. The declaration, which contained a promise that the maker of it would 'never exert any power or any influence to injure or subvert the Protestant' Established Church, was to be taken by the members of every corporation, and, at the pleasure of the Crown, by the holder of every office. Russell, though he disliked the declaration, assented to it for the sake of securing the success of his measure. It

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 781. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 68.

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was accordingly engrafted without opposition on the bill, which had been introduced to give effect to the Resolution of the 26th of February; and with this amendment the measure was sent to the House of Lords.[1]

Lord John Russell had undoubtedly secured a great victory for the friends of religious liberty. But the fruits of his victory could not have been reaped if it had not been for the assistance of Peel. Under ordinary circumstances the measure, which the House of Commons had passed, would have been immediately rejected by the Lords. Peel, however, had not merely concluded a successful compromise in the House of Commons; he had at the same time effectually checkmated the reactionary party in the Peers. Lord Eldon was as anxious as ever to assume the championship of the Church. But it was one thing to protect an institution whose regular garrison was prepared to make an effort for its defence; it was another to defend a cause which was flung over by its natural supporters. The Archbishop of York, speaking in the name of the Church, assented to the bill; the Bishops of Durham and Chester supported the Archbishop; and Lord Eldon's honest anger at the 'bad, mischievous, and revolutionary measure' fell on ears that would not hear. It was in vain that Lord Redesdale, though he was eighty years of age, drove up from Gloucestershire for the express purpose of opposing the bill. It was in vain that the Duke of Cumberland identified himself with the minority, and resolutely resisted the attack on the Church. The composition of the minority only testified to the change which had been silently effected in the views of the nation. The old men of eighty, faithful to the principles universally accepted in their younger days, were outvoted by the younger members who had been nurtured in the freer atmosphere of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. pp. 1180–1329. The details of Peel's negotiation with the Bishops will be found in his *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 69–99.

the nineteenth century. All that the Peers could do was to amplify the first words of the declaration and insist upon its being made 'solemnly and sincerely in the presence of Almighty God, and upon the true faith of a Christian.' The Peers hardly saw the full consequences of their amendment. In affording the Dissenters relief they had unconsciously imposed a fresh disability on the Jews.[1]

which is carried in the Lords.

The victory had been won; the bill had been carried; the disabilities of the Dissenters had been removed; and a successful blow had, at last, been struck at the monopoly of the Church. Stout-hearted Tories like Lord Eldon felt a genuine alarm at the consequences of the measure. They thought that, as concessions had been made to the Dissenters, it would be impossible to refuse them to the Roman Catholics. Ten days after the bill repealing the Test and Corporation Acts had passed the Peers, Burdett brought forward the Roman Catholic question in the House of Commons. The debate which ensued upon his motion extended over three nights. The Cabinet was equally divided in the division. Three members—Huskisson, Palmerston, and Grant—supported Burdett; three other members—Peel, Goulburn, and Herries—voted against him. Burdett found himself, in a full House, in a majority of six. A similar motion, in 1827, had been rejected by a majority of four. The minority in 1827, the majority in 1828, had consisted of the same number—272 members. The strength of the Protestants had decreased in the interval from 276 to 266 votes.[2]

The Roman Catholic question.

Peel was so discouraged by this defeat that he told the Duke of Wellington that he must retire at an early period from the Government. He begged the duke, in the meanwhile, to refrain from using any language which

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 99; Eldon, vol. iii. pp. 38–44; Colchester, vol. iii. p. 555, who was so intent on supporting Lord Eldon that he does not notice the successful amendment. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. pp. 1450, 1571, 1592; vol. xix. p. 39.

[2] For the debate and division see *Hansard*, vol. xix. pp. 375–680.

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would preclude him from seriously considering the whole question in the recess. The duke agreed with the advice which was thus given to him. On the 9th of June, Lord Lansdowne brought the Resolution of the Commons before the House of Lords. Lord Lansdowne was beaten by a majority of 44; but men noticed the altered tone in which the claims of the Roman Catholics were resisted by the Ministry. The Chancellor, who, a year before, had distinguished himself for the vehemence of his opposition, admitted that the subject presented great difficulty. Lyndhurst's admission was subsequently confirmed by the Prime Minister; and Lord Lansdowne openly deduced from their language that the Ministry intended to bring forward some measure of their own. Lord Lansdowne was not the only person who placed this interpretation on the speeches of ministers. Protestant Peers, at the dinner-table and in the Park, asked each other what the duke meant by his unexpected language. Tory Peers, trembling for the future, attempted to extract some explanation from the Prime Minister.[1]

A great difficulty had, in fact, arisen which no minister could have ignored. The Ministry of the Duke of Wellington had not lasted for half a year; but it had been rent during the whole period by internal divisions. The members of it held radically different views on almost every question which came before them. They could not agree about Greece; they could not agree about Codrington; they could not agree about the Corn Laws; they could not agree about Reform; they only abstained from quarrelling on the Roman Catholic question because they had agreed from the first to differ upon it. The Corn Laws formed the first subject on which an open rupture took place. The duke had defeated the bill of 1827; and his conduct on that occasion had forced him to deal

The Corn Laws.

[1] For the debate see *Hansard*, vol. xix. pp. 1133–1296. Cf. also Colchester, vol. iii. pp. 569–572.

with the question himself. Early in March the Cabinet met to settle the subject. The duke desired that the 20*s.* duty should commence when the average price of wheat stood at 65*s.* instead of 60*s.* a quarter; he proposed to retain his famous warehousing amendment of the previous year. Huskisson at once declared that he could not face the House of Commons with such a measure, and the Cabinet broke up without coming to any decision. It met again on the following day, and the duke pressed upon his colleagues the adoption of at any rate one of his two amendments. Huskisson refused to agree to either. Peel supported Huskisson; and the Cabinet again separated, the duke in evident ill-humour. The Cabinet met for the third time on the next day. The duke still clung to the principle of making some distinction between corn imported direct from abroad and corn taken out of a warehouse. Every single member of his Cabinet was against him; but the duke stood firm, and the Cabinet separated for the third time without arriving at any decision.

The discussions of the Cabinet upon them.

During the discussions which took place in the Cabinet Huskisson suggested a possible compromise. He proposed that the 20*s.* duty should commence when the average price of wheat stood at 60*s.*; but that, if more than 200,000 quarters of corn were imported in any twelve weeks, the duty should be increased by one-fourth till the average price amounted to 66*s.* Grant, the President of the Board of Trade, objected to this concession. For the sake of meeting Grant's objections, and at the same time of conciliating the duke, Peel amended Huskisson's proposal by suggesting that the increase of duty should be only a fifth instead of a fourth. All the Cabinet except Grant assented to this suggestion. Grant asked for time to think it over. His immediate friends in the Cabinet—Huskisson, Palmerston, and Dudley—begged him to assent to it. They pointed out to him

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that his own retirement must necessarily be followed by Huskisson's resignation; that resignation on such ground would be ridiculous; and that the world would insist on believing that it was due to differences on other subjects. They were not able to shake their colleague, and Huskisson, with a heavy heart, went to the king and tendered his resignation. Grant's resolution, however, did not survive his colleague's departure. After Huskisson had left him Goulburn called upon him, and persuaded him to yield. While he was speaking to the king, and explaining the reasons of his resignation, Huskisson received a message from Peel that Grant had consented to go on. The rupture of the Administration, which had been apapparently imminent, was thus averted.[1] Both Houses of Parliament ultimately accepted the principle which the Cabinet had adopted; and a new Corn Law, framed in accordance with it, was passed.[2]

The rupture of the Administration was, however, only postponed for the time. A more difficult domestic question than the Corn Laws was ripe for settlement. The general election of 1826 had been characterised by the proceedings which had from time immemorial distinguished these contests. Constituencies had been bought and sold; and corrupt voters, imitating the example of their betters, had, as usual, sold themselves. The two boroughs in which bribery had been most shameless, or in which the constituents had taken the least precautions against detection, were Penryn and East Retford. Penryn was an old offender. Its conduct had been investigated in 1807 and 1819; and the candidates in 1826 were so much impressed with the recollection of these previous investigations that they ordered the town crier to declare that the practice previously resorted to of making the electors 'comfortable' would be discontinued.

Bribery at Penryn and East Retford.

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 245. Cf. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 1379.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 1524.

It is proverbially easy, however, to form a good intention; it is a much more difficult matter to carry it into effect. The electors, missing their accustomed comforts, refused to vote. The poll, during the two first days of the election, went on only languidly; and the virtue of the candidates surrendered to the passive resistance of the electors.

The case of East Retford was even more flagrant than that of Penryn. It was proved to the committee from the evidence of several witnesses that it was 'a notorious, long-continued, and general practice for the electors who voted for the successful candidates to receive twenty guineas from each of them; so that those burgesses who voted for both the members returned have customarily received forty guineas for such exercise of their elective franchise.' In addition to this notorious, long-continued, and general practice, 'the most extensive treating was established there as a rooted and inveterate habit.' 'Some months prior to the election,' and 'beyond the period of the return, several public houses in the interest of' the successful candidates were open to the voters.[1] Penryn and East Retford, indeed, were not singular in their offence; they were only singular in being found out. Their case was, however, so gross that even an unreformed Parliament could not avoid taking notice of it. On the 8th of May, 1827, Legh Keck, the member for Leicestershire, obtained leave to introduce a bill for the better prevention of bribery at Penryn. On the 11th of June Tennyson, the member for Blechingley, obtained leave to introduce a bill for the disfranchisement of East Retford, and for the transfer of its two members to Birmingham. For the first time since the disfranchisement of Grampound a really practical proposal had been made for the discouragement of bribery.

[1] For the case of Penryn see *Hansard*, vol. xvii. pp. 682–703. For that of East Retford, ibid., p. 1200.

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Fresh dissensions in the Cabinet,

The East Retford Bill was introduced at a late period of the session. It was read a second time on the 23rd of June, and then dropped, for the year, by its promoters.[1] The Penryn bill made further progress. It was read a second time on the 18th of May; the House went into committee upon it on the 28th of May, and Lord John Russell proposed in committee the disfranchisement of the borough. Canning, rising as Prime Minister, thought that the degree of guilt which had been proved against Penryn did not justify so strong a measure as the total disfranchisement of the town. But he could not even carry his own Cabinet with him. Lord John Russell's amendment was adopted by 124 votes to 69; and the bill, thus disenfranchising Penryn, was read a third time and passed on the 7th of June.[2]

In the session of 1827, then, the House of Commons had assented to the principle of disfranchising East Retford; and they had actually passed a measure disfranchising Penryn. Both the bills were again brought forward at the commencement of 1828. On the 31st of January Lord John Russell obtained leave to introduce a bill for transferring the elective franchise from Penryn to Manchester, and, on the same evening, Tennyson introduced a bill for transferring the representation of East Retford to Birmingham.[3] The Cabinet had hardly been a fortnight in office; but these motions instantly involved its members in a quarrel. The Tory section of the Cabinet desired, instead of disfranchising the boroughs, to throw them into the adjacent hundreds. The Liberal section was in favour of transferring the representation to some large towns. Peel, who on most questions was the arbiter among his colleagues, suggested that the difference might be settled by a compromise, that one of the boroughs might be thrown into the hun-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xvii. p. 1379. [2] Ibid., pp. 1055, 1155.
[3] Ibid., vol. xviii. p. 89.

dred, and that the representation of the other might be given to a town. The compromise was accepted; but its acceptance led to a fresh discussion. Huskisson wished to disfranchise Retford because its case was the worst. Peel wished to disfranchise Penryn because its conduct had been more frequently before Parliament, and because Cornwall was more thickly studded with boroughs than any other county. Peel's opinion was ultimately adopted; and the Cabinet, after almost endless debate, arrived at an agreement.[1]

On the 21st of March, when the East Retford bill was in committee, Peel proposed the compromise which the Cabinet had already agreed to. The House assented to the proposition of its leader, and agreed 'to an instruction to the committee on the Retford bill to alter it by substituting the hundred of Bassetlaw for the borough of Birmingham. The Penryn bill was, in the meanwhile, 'sent to the Lords,' and 'East Retford lay-to, to wait the result of Penryn. The Cornishmen, however, regained courage, and swore so stoutly at the bar of the Lords that even Lord Carnarvon, who had charge of the disfranchisement bill, gave up the case, as far as sending the right to a town, and proposed the hundred instead. In this state of things Tennyson gave notice that he should, on the 19th of May, go on with Retford, and Nicholson Calvert was to move in committee his alteration substituting the hundred for Birmingham.'[2] On the afternoon of the day on which the consideration of the East Retford bill was resumed the Cabinet met. Peel declared that he considered himself free to vote as he liked. Huskisson stated that he had pledged himself from the first, if only one place were disfranchised, to vote for sending that place to a town. Bathurst objected, in any event, to the enfranchisement of a large town; and Mel-

which are carried into the House.

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 253. Cf. *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 1280.

[2] Ibid. p. 254. It is impossible to improve on Lord Palmerston's concise and clear description.

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ville said that Grampound had been dealt with as an open question in 1821, and that Retford might similarly be made an open question in 1828. The Cabinet, as usual, separated without arriving at any decision. Peel went down to the House and supported Nicholson Calvert's proposal to enfranchise the hundred. Huskisson, taunted with his previous pledges, privately told his colleagues that he could not support Calvert, and pressed for delay. Delay, however, could not be obtained; the House divided on Calvert's amendment; and Huskisson voted against Peel. Palmerston and Lamb followed Huskisson into the lobby; but, notwithstanding their defection, Peel found himself in a majority of 18.[1]

Huskisson resigns.

Peel was unable to conceal his annoyance at Huskisson's conduct. He looked nettled and discomposed, and avoided his refractory colleagues. They, on their part, took the matter in various ways. Palmerston went home to bed, and thought no more about it. Instead of going to bed, Huskisson, on reaching home, wrote a hasty letter to Wellington. 'After the vote which, in regard to my own consistency and personal character, I have found myself, from the course of this evening's debate, compelled to give on the East Retford question, I owe to you, as the head of the Administration, and to Mr. Peel, as the leader of the House of Commons, to lose no time in affording you an opportunity of placing my office in other hands.' The duke received the letter at ten o'clock on the following morning. He immediately showed it to Bathurst, who happened to be with him at the time; and Bathurst advised him to pin his insubordinate colleague to his word, and to transmit Huskisson's resignation to the king. The duke, sick of the incessant disputes which had paralysed the action of the Cabinet, adopted Bathurst's advice. He wrote a short note to Huskisson, saying that his letter had given him great concern, but

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 813. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 257.

that he had considered it his duty to lay it before the king. Nothing could exceed the surprise with which Huskisson realised the consequences of his foolish letter. He had persuaded himself that an offer to resign was a totally different thing from a positive resignation; that his duty to the duke compelled him to offer to retire; and that the duke's duty towards the public should have induced his Grace to keep his Cabinet together. He accordingly sent Dudley and Palmerston to the duke to arrange the matter. He wrote himself with the same object. But the duke persisted in regarding the letter as a positive resignation. For the next few days the Canningites endeavoured to shake the duke's decision. They found themselves utterly unable to do so. Huskisson's hasty letter had been interpreted as the resignation of his office; and, sorely against his will, he had to resign.[1]

Exactly a year had passed since an ill-expressed letter of Huskisson's to the Duke of Wellington had led to the loss of Canning's Corn Bill, and to the defeat of Canning's Administration. The experience which the writer had acquired in 1827 had not taught him the necessity of expressing himself with precision. His knowledge of the world, his long Parliamentary career, did not prevent him from indulging in a feeble whine that the duke should have insisted on placing the natural interpretation upon his words. It is obvious, however, that no minister, with any respect for himself, could have regarded Huskisson's resignation as an isolated act, or have refrained from considering it in connection with the events of the preceding year and the divisions in the Cabinet. It may be doubted whether the Duke of Wellington was wise in pinning his colleague to his words. It cannot be doubted that he was justified in doing so.

[1] The correspondence and debate upon it will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 449–478, and *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 915. Cf. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 258; Le Marchant's *Spencer*, 228, note; and Greville, vol. i. p. 130.

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Huskisson's resignation is followed by that of four other members of the Cabinet.

Huskisson's resignation almost immediately led to the retirement of Palmerston, Grant, Dudley, and Lamb. Palmerston was, from the first, clear that Huskisson's retirement involved his own resignation. The Canningites had joined the Duke of Wellington in a body; it was evident to him that their duty towards one another compelled them to leave him in a body. For himself, he had been Secretary-at-War for nineteen years; he had served under Perceval, Liverpool, Canning, and Wellington; and his admirable capacity for business and his genial manners had made him universally popular. Beginning life under Tory auspices, he had at last seceded from a Tory Government; and, notwithstanding the moderation of his views, he never again entered a Tory Cabinet. Grant, brilliant but irresolute, had with difficulty been dissuaded from resigning in March. There was no difficulty in persuading him to resign in May. Lamb was disposed to underrate the great qualities of the duke; he disliked his connection with the extreme Tories; and he doubted whether there was anyone in the Tory camp who was capable of replacing Huskisson at the Colonial Office. It did not require any great pressure to induce him to resign; and the only pang which his resignation cost him was due to the termination of his official intercourse with Peel. Dudley alone hesitated. He would have willingly (so said his friends) given 6,000*l.* a year out of his own pocket, instead of receiving that sum from the public, for the pleasure of remaining at the Foreign Office; and he was thrown into an agony of doubt and irresolution by the resignation of his colleagues. He was at last persuaded that both his credit and comfort would be gone if he remained in the Cabinet without the support of his own political friends; and, with a heavy heart and some hesitation, he at last consented to leave office.[1]

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 274, and appendix, p. 380.

The political gossips of the day manifested some anxiety to see how the vacancies which were thus created would be filled up. The arrangements which the duke made excited a good deal of comment. Sir Henry Hardinge, an officer in the Guards, replaced Palmerston as Secretary-at-War. Hardinge's chief claim for office was his near relationship to Lord Londonderry, who had brought him into Parliament as member for Durham. A more distinguished officer, Sir George Murray, who had been Quartermaster-General to the duke in Spain, and who had commanded the forces in Ireland, succeeded Huskisson at the Colonial Office. Murray was member for Perthshire; but he had given no signs of any capacity in debate; he had displayed no qualifications for administering a civil office; and he became, in the opinion of persons competent to judge, the most inefficient of public servants.[1] Lord Aberdeen was promoted to the Foreign Office; Lord Francis Leveson-Gower[2] became Chief Secretary for Ireland; and Vesey Fitzgerald, the member for Clare, President of the Board of Trade. These, and one or two minor alterations, completed the changes which had become necessary from Huskisson's retirement.

The reconstruction of the Ministry.

The joy of the Tory party at these changes was extravagant and unconcealed. The Duke of Wellington had, at last, placed himself at the head of a purely Tory Administration. An unadulterated Cabinet of this description had not existed for twenty years. Even Perceval, the favourite champion of the Tory party, had never ventured on forming a Ministry from such reactionary materials as those which the duke had employed for the purpose. Wild in their delight, the Tories rallied at the Pitt dinner at the end of May, and, at Lord Eldon's bidding, gave one cheer more for the Protestant ascen-

The delight of the Tories.

[1] Greville, vol. ii. p. 11.

[2] Lord Francis Gower had just resigned an Under-Secretaryship, but he was, notwithstanding, persuaded to accept the promotion.—Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 473, 491.

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dancy.[1] Their victory seemed, in fact, to all appearances complete. Liberal statesmen might regret the formation, not merely of a Tory Cabinet, but of a military Cabinet.[2] Whatever regret they might feel, they were powerless to interfere. The Duke of Wellington 'is King of England,' was George IV.'s complaint a few months afterwards.[3] England, he might have added, had never enjoyed before so honest and simple-minded a king. But the duke, in reality, was less powerful than George IV. supposed. The authority of the Cabinet did not repose in the duke alone, but was enjoyed by Peel, Lyndhurst, and the duke. During the next two years these three men governed England, and the Cabinet did little else than register their decisions. For the higher purposes of government Murray and Hardinge, Fitzgerald and Goulburn, were as powerless as the clerks and underlings who carried out their instructions in their several departments.

Vesey Fitzgerald's appointment.

No one understood the principle on which Fitzgerald had been made President of the Board of Trade. Everyone knew that he was a wealthy Irish landlord; everyone gave him credit for comparatively liberal opinions. He had always supported the emancipation of the Roman Catholics; he had the reputation of being popular among his tenantry. But his chief recommendation for his new office was an absolute ignorance of commercial matters. His mind (so his Vice-President confessed) on all questions of trade and commerce, was like a sheet of blank paper.[4] His appointment was universally disapproved;[5] but its consequences were expected by no one. Every member of the House of Commons accepting office from the Crown was bound to vacate his seat and to offer himself for re-election. But Fitzgerald had a seat which was, to all appearances, secure. The forty shilling freeholders of Clare

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 132.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 904.
[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 612.
[4] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 286.
[5] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 569.

had always attended their landlords to the poll with the instinctive readiness with which a flock of sheep follow their bellwether. The landlords of Clare would vote to the last man for the President of the Board of Trade in a Tory Ministry. In accepting office Fitzgerald had apparently nothing to dread but the inconvenience of a few weeks' absence from London and the bustle and expense of a fresh election. The news of his appointment, however, had hardly reached Ireland before disquieting rumours of a possible contest disturbed the equanimity of his friends. The proceedings of the Catholic Association had not been checked by the Act of 1825. Itinerant orators were employed by it to proclaim its principles in every parish, and to enlist the great masses of the population under its banners. An agitation of this character was almost certain to be successful in Ireland. The people, warmed by the eloquence addressed to them, and encouraged by their priests, enlisted in the cause of the Association, and venerated O'Connell as the champion of their cause.

The Clare election.

Fitzgerald vacated his seat for Clare, and O'Connell decided on affording a signal proof of the indisputable power which he had acquired. At the general election of 1826 he had persuaded the electors of Waterford to reject a Beresford and to return an unexceptionable candidate of his own proposing. What would the Saxon think if, in 1828, he told the electors of Clare to return himself? It was true that he was a stranger to the county; that the laws incapacitated him from sitting in Parliament; and that the electors, in returning him, would vote for him with the knowledge that their suffrages were thrown away. It was true also that Fitzgerald was eminently popular; that he was possessed of all the advantages derivable from property and station; that he had consistently voted for the relief of the Roman Catholics; and that he had held high office, years before, in the

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Irish Government. Every disqualification which could be urged against O'Connell, every advantage which Fitzgerald possessed, would only emphasise the victory of the Association. The news that O'Connell was a candidate roused Clare from Galway to the Shannon into a wild tumult of enthusiasm. On the day of the election the forty-shilling freeholders marched into Ennis, the county town, led by their parish priests, to vote for God and O'Connell. 'The country is mad,' wrote Fitzgerald. If it were mad there was at least method in its madness. For five days Fitzgerald maintained an unequal contest. All the gentry of the county, all the fifty pound freeholders voted for him; but the poorer electors to a man voted for O'Connell. After five days, Fitzgerald, finding his prospects hopeless, retired from he contest, and O'Connell was triumphantly returned.[1]

The consequences of the lection.

The blindest Protestant could not fail to perceive the importance of this election. The Irish had learned their power; they had returned a Roman Catholic to Parliament; there was no reason to doubt that they were as powerful in almost every other Irish county as they had proved themselves in Clare. There was no reason to suppose that they would refrain from exercising their power. 'This business,' wrote Lord Eldon,[2] 'must bring the Roman Catholic question, which has been so often discussed, to a crisis and a conclusion.' It was as obvious to every politician as it was plain to Lord Eldon that the Ministry could no longer sit still and do nothing. But there was a wide difference of opinion as to what should be done. Hot-headed Tories, who at the Pitt dinner had given one cheer more for the Protestant ascendancy, were quite ready to prescribe a remedy. The Clare election had been won by the forty shilling freeholders; and the forty shilling freeholders throughout Ireland must, in con-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, pp. 120–129. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 106–115.
[2] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 54.

sequence, be disfranchised. Ireland, if necessary, must be crushed into obedience by the application of force; and the Roman Catholic majority in one country must be taught to acknowledge the supremacy of the Protestant majority in the other. There was, however, one weak point in this reasoning which prudent men, less impulsive than extreme Tories, could not fail to perceive. Forty shilling freeholders could not be disfranchised, repressive measures could not be adopted, without the consent of Parliament; and it was hopeless to expect that the House of Commons would consent to either remedy unless it was accompanied by the relief of the Roman Catholics. A few months before, indeed, a Protestant Ministry, resolved on extreme measures, might have ventured on raising the cry of 'No Popery' and on appealing to the intolerant masses of the English constituencies. But the Clare election had deprived the Duke of Wellington of this expedient. The dissolution of Parliament would inevitably lead to fifty Clare elections and to the return of fifty O'Connells. No minister who was either wise or honest would venture on incurring such a risk.[1]

The condition of Ireland.

Some remedy, however, was indispensably necessary. The Catholic Association, encouraged by its victory, continued its agitation. The enthusiasm which its orators excited spread even among the Constabulary and the troops. The Government believed that one word from O'Connell would plunge Ireland into civil war; they distrusted the men on whose arms they depended for the suppression of revolt or disorder. Lord Anglesey, the Lord Lieutenant, was not likely to be easily disturbed at the prospect of bloodshed; he was not likely to recommend a humiliating or an unnecessary concession. But Lord Anglesey formed a strong opinion, which he did not hesitate to communicate to the Government, that 'the first

Lord Anglesey urges concession.

[1] The whole difficulty of the Clare election is admirably stated in Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 116–126.

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moment of composure and tranquillity should be seized to signify the intention of adjusting the question.'[1] Peel's thoughts had, it has already been stated, been gradually taking the same direction. They were confirmed by the strong terms in which Lord Anglesey urged concession. He saw, or fancied that he saw, that the time had arrived when it was necessary to yield, and decided on recommending the Duke of Wellington to concede political equality to the Roman Catholics. Though, however, concession was, in his judgment, necessary, Peel concluded that his own antecedents made it undesirable for him to propose it. No one could doubt the sincerity of his conversion if it were accompanied by his retirement from the Ministry.

Peel adopts Lord Anglesey's opinion.

Wellington also inclines to the same view.

The Duke of Wellington's opinions were also slowly undergoing a remarkable change. The duke approached a political question in the manner in which he would have surveyed a military position. Quatre Bras was a convenient position while the Prussians stood firm at Ligny. The defeat of Blucher exposed the British flank, and necessitated the retreat to Waterloo. The duke's flank had again been turned by O'Connell's victory in Clare; and from a tactical point of view a change of position had become absolutely necessary. The duke's honesty was so great, and so well known, that no one could suspect him of any personal intrigue in assenting to such a change. Everyone knew that he would gladly have retired from the Treasury and resumed the command of the army. Everyone knew that he sacrificed his ease and his inclinations by occupying the chief place in the Administration. His change of front could, therefore, be made without exciting the suspicions which the change in Peel's views was certain to arouse.

It has been already stated that Peel mentioned the change in his opinions to the duke during the session.

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 149.

Soon after its close, he sent the duke an elaborate explanation of his reasons for it.[1] The duke consulted none of his other colleagues, except the Chancellor, upon the subject. He did not expressly assent to Peel's views; but he foresaw the probability that it would be requisite to act upon them. It was necessary, therefore, to anticipate the possibility of Peel's resignation. But Peel's retirement would involve the reconstruction of the Government; it would be no easy matter to fill up the vacancy which his resignation would create. No member of the extreme Tory party was capable of leading the House of Commons; and the Ministry would, therefore, in all probability, be unable to survive his loss without obtaining additional strength from some other quarter. It was unlikely, however, that any prominent politician, outside the Tory party, would consent to join the Ministry alone; and it was, therefore, desirable to reserve one or two places in the Cabinet to which any new allies might be appointed.

The Duke of Clarence's dismissal.

A singular circumstance made the arrangement thus contemplated practicable. For a year and a half the Duke of Clarence had filled the office of Lord High Admiral; but his eccentric conduct had estranged him from every officer in his department, and had put the country to considerable expense. He had insisted on personally inspecting every ship that went to sea; he was perpetually going down to Portsmouth and Plymouth to give colours to regiments that wanted none. Unhappy commanding officers, forced to entertain his Royal Highness, were half ruined with the expense of doing so. His council remonstrated; and he fancied that, if he went to sea, he would free himself from their control. He made the experiment; and was astonished to receive a fresh remonstrance. He returned and insulted Sir George Cockburn, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 181.

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The other Lords rallied round Cockburn. The prince declared that he could not remain in office if Cockburn were not removed. Wellington declined to sacrifice Cockburn to gratify the spite of the heir-presumptive to the throne; and the prince accordingly had to resign the office which his eccentric habits disqualified him from holding.[1]

The Duke of Wellington did not venture on the appointment of another Lord High Admiral. The Admiralty, as usual, was put under a commission; and, much against his will, Lord Melville, who had been President of the Board of Control, was placed at the head of it. Lord Ellenborough, who held the office of Privy Seal, was promoted to Lord Melville's place; and the Privy Seal itself was left vacant. I wish to keep it vacant, wrote the Duke of Wellington to Peel, 'because I am under the necessity of looking forward to future misfortunes. I consider you not pledged to anything; but I cannot but look to the not impossible case of your finding yourself obliged to leave us to ourselves. In this case I must have the command of all the means possible to make an arrangement to carry on the king's service, and I would keep other offices vacant if I could.'[2]

The Tories were unacquainted with the reasons which influenced the duke in keeping the Privy Seal vacant, but they were haunted by grave apprehensions respecting the future policy of the Cabinet. The satisfaction with which they had witnessed the separation of the Canningites from the Ministry had been damped by the duke's moderate language and by the events of the Clare election. They separated at the end of the session full of misgivings; and some of the earliest news which arrived from Ireland during the recess increased their

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 295. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 269. Greville, vol. i. p. 140.

[2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 272. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 297.

fears, and confirmed their suspicions. None of the extreme Tories, who had hitherto resisted concession, had been more intolerant than George Dawson, the member for Derry, and the brother-in-law of Peel. Only a few months before he had especially distinguished himself by the pertinacity and violence of his attacks upon Canning. On the 12th of August, Dawson made a speech at Derry, in which he entered, at some length, into the condition of Ireland, and pointed to the impossibility of continuing a policy of resistance.[1] The speech fell like a thunderbolt on the Orange audience whom Dawson was addressing; it startled the stout Tory members who had listened to Dawson's eloquence in the House, and who had hitherto regarded him as an even stauncher Protestant than themselves. Would such a speech—so they asked one another—have been made by the brother-in-law of a minister without the minister's knowledge? Was it not, at any rate, a fair inference that the causes which had weight with Dawson might also be influencing Peel?

Dawson's speech at Derry.

The circumstances were, in fact, grave enough to account for any modification in the plans of a Ministry. The Act, which had been passed in 1825, to suppress secret societies in Ireland had not proved very successful. But the slight restraint which this Act had imposed on Catholics and Orangemen was removed by its expiration in July 1828. From that moment there was nothing to prevent Orange processions and Catholic meetings. The leaders of the Roman Catholic party, freed from all restrictions, extended the organisation of their association to the remotest districts of Ireland, and established a branch in every parish. The Protestants of Ulster, alarmed at the organisation of their hereditary foes, formed themselves into Brunswick Clubs, and awaited the attack which they affected to believe would be made upon them. The Irish stood arrayed in two hostile

The condition of Ireland.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 130.

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camps, ready, at the smallest encouragement, to fly at each others' throats. The accounts from the South were frightful. The men of Tipperary marched to monster meetings in military array. Peaceful citizens shuddered at the power which an irresponsible association had created, and which the responsible Government seemed unable to control.[1] But the danger of disturbance was even greater in the North than in the South. In the South the people had everything their own way. There was less chance of an explosion, because there was no opposing element on which the match could be struck. In the North, on the contrary, the people were more evenly balanced. Brunswickers and Catholics dwelt together in the same streets and in the same villages; and the possibility of collision was thus increased. There a chance spark might at any moment produce a flame; and the spark was certain to be forthcoming in Ireland. 'They are very feverish in the North,' wrote the Lord Lieutenant. 'The Brunswickers are rivalling the Association both in violence and in rant.'[2]

Lawless in Ulster.

O'Connell's chief assistants, or rivals, in the Roman Catholic Association in Dublin were Sheil and Lawless. Those who were acquainted with the triumvirate thought Sheil the ablest and Lawless the bravest or most desperate of the three. Lawless was a typical Irishman. He had the ready eloquence, the instinctive daring, the love of a row which characterise his race. He was prepared to accept the most dangerous missions from the Association. There was no risk in addressing the enthusiastic meetings which assembled in their thousands in Munster and Connaught; but there was an undeniable danger in proceeding on a tour of agitation in Ulster. In September 1828 Lawless encountered this peril. Travelling from parish to parish, he addressed the people in the Catholic chapels, and inflamed their passions against their Protes-

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 206, 220. [2] Ibid., pp. 207, 208.

tant fellow-subjects. He entered Protestant towns at the head of vast trains of Roman Catholic admirers, and he boasted that he would take possession of Armagh at the head of his supporters. The Protestants, firing at the challenge, assembled in arms to dispute his entry, and Lawless had to turn aside towards Ballybay. The military authorities, however, alarmed at the growing prospects of collision, persuaded him again to alter his purpose, and to retire on Carrickmacross. The Catholic Association, unprepared for actual warfare, recalled their intemperate agent; and the immediate danger which Lawless's progress had occasioned was thus removed.[1]

The condition of Munster.

The match had harmlessly burned itself out, and no serious explosion had occurred. But the people arrayed against each other were still ready and impatient for action. The men of the South, assembled in military array, horse and foot, clothed in uniform, were anxiously asking O'Connell and Sheil when they were to begin. For the sake of the great cause which they had pledged themselves to support they had composed their domestic differences; and they had no longer the satisfaction of breaking each others' heads for the sake of a little amusement. What was the use of abstaining from their own broils if they were not going to fight anyone else? Whom could they fight except the Orangemen and the Government? And when—when were they going to begin? Fortunately for the Roman Catholics of Ireland, the man at the head of their organisation was as wise as he was bold. O'Connell knew perfectly well that the first hostile movement on the part of the Catholics of the South would call a more formidable enemy into the field than the Brunswickers of the North. It was one thing to deal with the Protestants of Ulster; it was another to reckon with the Protestants of Great Britain. His authority had called a people to arms. The combatants,

O'Connell gives the signal for peace.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 140. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 240.

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gathering together on either side of the arena, which Ireland had become, were preparing for the encounter which was apparently inevitable. The ministers, to use Sheil's striking simile, folded their arms and sat quiet and inactive, 'as if two gladiators were crossing their swords for their recreation.' What if O'Connell gave a new and more decisive proof of his influence and power? What if he allayed the tempest which his authority had raised? At the end of September he issued an address and adjured the people to discontinue their meetings. An entire nation, obedient to his will, submitted without a murmur to the unexpected command.

The Government, which had been saved by O'Connell from the imminent danger which it had encountered, subsequently issued its own proclamation denouncing unlawful assemblies;[1] it even ventured on arresting the intemperate emissary whom the Association had already recalled from Ballybay. But these tardy marks of returning vigour gave no one any confidence in its firmness. Lord Anglesey's policy was denounced throughout Ireland. 'The sentiment,' wrote Vesey Fitzgerald to Peel, 'is universal of disgust, indignation, and alarm at the proceedings of' his Government. It was gratifying to reflect that the danger of civil war in Ireland had been averted. It was unsatisfactory to remember that the peril had been removed by the intervention of O'Connell.[2]

Protestant agitation in England.

The agitation which had extended throughout Ireland was not confined to that country. The Protestants of England banded themselves together in support of their Irish co-religionists. A Brunswick Club, of which Lord Eldon became a member, was formed in London. Mass

[1] This proclamation is printed in *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 188.

[2] Lord Anglesey's friends, it is fair to add, complained that he got no support and no advice from the English Government. They stated that O'Connell's proclamation was issued at the advice of the Lord Lieutenant. See Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 308. Cf., for Fitzgerald's opinion, Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 263.

meetings, to protest against any concession to the Roman Catholics, were held in different parts of the country. The first and most famous of these met at Pennenden Heath, on the 24th of October. It was attended by twenty thousand persons; the foremost men in the county were present at it; and, on their advice, a petition to the House of Commons was adopted, praying that the Protestant Constitution might be preserved entire and inviolate. The example which was thus set in Kent found imitators in other parts of the country. Brunswick Clubs were formed, and men were enrolled in an organisation for the defence of the Church. Sturdy Protestants who had voted for the Six Acts were not ashamed to encourage this new demonstration of numbers. They saw no harm in adopting, for the sake of the Church, the very measures which they had punished the Radicals for taking for the sake of Reform.[1]

In the meanwhile the Cabinet had arrived at no decision on the great question which was disquieting the country. Lord Anglesey was continually urging the necessity of concession upon his colleagues. Peel had already communicated his definite opinion to the Duke of Wellington. The duke desired to obtain the king's leave for the consideration of the subject by the Cabinet; and the king, pitiably irresolute, hesitated to give his consent. While things were in this condition Curtis, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, wrote a remarkable letter to Wellington. Years before Curtis had held high office in the University of Salamanca; he had, in consequence, been thrown into communication with the duke in Spain; and the duke had formed a very high opinion of the future primate's honesty. Curtis was in the habit of occasionally corresponding with the duke on Irish subjects. On the 4th of December, 1828, he wrote to the duke, urging on him the importance of settling the Roman Catholic ques-

Archbishop Curtis writes to the duke.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 147.

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tion. The duke rejoined that he was sincerely anxious to witness the settlement of it,[1] but that he saw no prospect of its settlement. Party had been mixed up with it to such a degree that men could not be brought to consider it dispassionately. 'If,' added the duke, 'we could bury it in oblivion for a short time, and employ that time diligently in the consideration of its difficulties on all sides, I should not despair of seeing a satisfactory remedy.' It was not possible to extract a very clear meaning out of this letter. A Roman Catholic might say that the duke's anxiety to settle the question proved him a convert to the cause. A Protestant might reply that the duke had said plainly that there was no prospect of its settlement. Curtis himself seems to have interpreted the letter in the latter sense. He wrote to the duke to assure him that there was no prospect of burying the question in oblivion. O'Connell, on the contrary, to whom Curtis gave the correspondence, affected to place the opposite interpretation upon the duke's letter. He carried it to the Association and read it as a proof that the Ministry were favourable to the claims of the Roman Catholics.

Lord Anglesey's correspondence with O'Connell.

The duke's letter had already caused some mischief. Curtis, however, was not satisfied with forwarding the correspondence to O'Connell. He sent a copy of it also to Lord Anglesey. Lord Anglesey replied that the correspondence was of the highest interest; that he was personally ignorant of the precise sentiments of the Duke of Wellington; that he differed from the duke in thinking that the question should be buried in oblivion; and that he was, on the contrary, anxious that all constitutional means

[1] The duke's secretaries—'these blockheads,' Greville irreverently terms them—were very anxious to prove that the duke had written 'a settlement,' not 'the settlement.'—Greville, vol. i. p. 148. Curtis's previous letters to the duke will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. ii. Mr. Reeve properly calls them excellent letters.—Greville, vol. ii. p. 148, note. They are well worth reading.

should be employed to forward the cause. The Prime Minister had in effect recommended that agitation should cease; the Lord Lieutenant suggested that agitation should continue. It was impossible that Wellington should pass over so gross a breach of discipline on the part of the Lord Lieutenant. Differences had already arisen between the Lord Lieutenant and himself, and Lord Anglesey had already been informed that it was the intention of Government to remove him.[1] His indiscreet letter to Curtis hastened his removal. He was immediately recalled; and the duke endeavoured to induce Lord Bathurst to assume the Viceroyalty of Ireland. Bathurst was too prudent to exchange his position in England for the thankless and unprofitable task of keeping peace among the Irish. He refused; and the duke thereupon selected the Duke of Northumberland for the office. The Duke of Northumberland's figure and fortune would, it was expected, make him popular in Ireland. His own love of display and magnificence made the Viceroyalty agreeable to himself.[2]

Lord Anglesey succeeded by the Duke of Northumberland.

The new Lord Lieutenant was appointed in January 1829. He had always opposed the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. His appointment justified the inference that the Ministry saw no prospect of settling the question. The king, in fact, refused to give way. Irritated beyond measure at the importunity of the duke, he was firm in his opposition to concession. Failing with the king, the duke, as a last chance, applied to the heads of the Church.

[1] These differences had arisen on various subjects. The Duke of Wellington wished, and Lord Anglesey refused, to give Lady Westmeath a pension of 400*l.* a year out of the Irish pension fund. The Duke of Wellington wished Lord Anglesey to remove two of the magistrates of Clare from the commission of the peace. Lord Anglesey refused to do so, on the advice of his law officers. The Duke objected to Lord Anglesey countenancing Lord Cloncurry, a member of the Catholic Association. Lord Anglesey defended Lord Cloncurry.—Greville, vol. ii. pp. 151, 157, 160. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. pp. 413, 442; and *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 1002, where the correspondence will be found.

[2] Greville, vol. i. pp. 158, 159.

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He hoped that, if they showed any disposition to relent, the king might be induced to yield. But the prelates whom the duke consulted were as much opposed to concession as the king. The duke returned from his interview with them under the conviction that a settlement was more improbable than ever. King, Peers, and Church were all opposed to concession. It seemed hopeless to carry a measure of relief against the united opposition of the three. Peel, however, convinced of the necessity of the measure, which it seemed impossible to carry, drew up an elaborate memorandum tracing the growth of public opinion on the subject, and proving the necessity of dealing with it. He forwarded his memorandum to the duke in a remarkable letter, in which he said that, if his own resignation should prove an insuperable obstacle to the settlement of the question, he would not persist in it. Armed with this memorandum, the duke again appealed to the king; and, five days afterwards, assured Peel that without his aid he would be unable to obtain the king's assent to the measure, while his Parliamentary difficulties would be augmented tenfold. Peel at once expressed his readiness to remain in office. Bathurst and Ellenborough, the leaders of the Protestant party in the Ministry, expressed their approval of his conduct. All the Protestant members of the Cabinet had subsequently separate interviews with the king to induce him to give way. The king's resolution sank at the determined advice of his ministers. He felt—so he afterwards complained—like a person with a pistol at his breast,[1] and with nothing to fall back upon. Passionate and irresolute by turns, he declared his undying resistance at one moment, he complained of his inability to resist at another; and so his weak nature gradually failed, and the king, still protesting that he would 'ne'er consent, consented.'[2]

Peel's offer to remain in office.

The king yields.

The 17th of January was over. 'Parliament was

[1] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 83. [2] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 282–298.

summoned for the 5th of February. It was necessary that the speech from the throne should announce the intentions of the Government. The duty of preparing the outline of the measure devolved upon Peel. He had made up his mind that concession was inevitable; he immediately saw the wisdom of making it complete. The broad principle which he laid down was equality of civil privilege; the exceptions to the rule should, he maintained, be as few as possible.

The Relief Bill prepared.

The secret of the Cabinet was well kept. No one knew what the Government was going to do. Rumours of possible concession were whispered in political circles, but men refused to accept the vague reports of the actual policy of the Ministry. Copies of the king's speech were, in accordance with the usual custom, forwarded to the leaders of the Opposition on the 4th of February, and the truth at once became known. Never had so great a sensation been unexpectedly created. The Whigs were naturally merry at the news; the Tories universally dejected. Tory Peers met together to talk over the policy of the Ministry and to vent their spite in furious abuse of Peel. Peel, they thought, was responsible for everything. Peel, they were agreed, had recklessly betrayed them. Could this be the same Peel who had seceded from Canning on the sole and express ground that he could not support the claims of the Roman Catholics? Could this be the same Peel who had been nicknamed 'Orange Peel' from the strength of his Protestant opinions? Conduct like his involved 'a gross violation of political rectitude and consistency.'[1] He could never again expect the support either of his party or of his constituents. The traitor must look for his reward from Rome. The Pope might add a new red letter day to the Calendar, and celebrate the conversion of St. Peel.[2]

Indignation against Peel.

[1] Lord Winchilsea, in House of Lords (*Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 14).
[2] Denman, vol. i. p. 302.

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Peel resigns his seat for Oxford.

Peel, in the meanwhile, had taken a decisive step. A sense of public duty had prevented him from resigning office; but no sense of public duty made it necessary for him to retain his connection with the University of Oxford. He wrote to the Vice-Chancellor announcing his intention of resigning, and leaving it to the University to determine the time at which it would be most convenient for him to do so. His resignation gave one English constituency an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the Roman Catholic question. A party in the University, capable of appreciating the circumstances which had led to his change of front, desired Peel's re-election. Another party, vigorous in their Church principles, was vehemently opposed to it. Peel reluctantly assented to the wishes of his supporters and stood again. The Protestant party set up Sir Robert Inglis in opposition to him. The Church, however, was too strong for the minister. Protestant parsons hurried up to Oxford to vote against the statesman who was venturing to encourage Rome. Protestant statesmen drove down from London to vote against the minister whom a few months before they had regarded as the hope of their party. Peel was beaten by 755 votes to 609; and had, in consequence, to obtain some other seat. Sir Manasseh Lopes, the hero of Grampound, offered to vacate his seat at Westbury to accommodate the minister. Rumour said that the minister gave Sir Manasseh a very large sum of money for the accommodation. The constituents of Westbury liked the bargain very much less than their patron. Sir Manasseh was himself struck with one of the many missiles with which the Town Hall was assailed. The return of Peel was secured with the greatest difficulty. Peel himself thought that if a Protestant candidate, who posted down from London, had arrived before instead of after the election, he would have been rejected by the little rotten borough.[1]

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 342.

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The result of the Oxford election, and the circumstances of the election for Westbury, afforded striking evidence of the clamour which the policy of the Ministry had everywhere provoked. But less welcome symptoms of it were visible every day. Night after night staunch Protestants presented petition after petition against the proposals of the Ministry. Week after week sturdy clergymen preached against concession in the pulpit. In the interval between Sunday and Sunday tracts were circulated among the people to inflame them against the Roman Catholics. Every act of tyranny which the Romanists of previous ages had committed was described with horrible minuteness to stimulate the passions of the multitude. 'No Popery' mobs paraded the streets of Glasgow and insulted and ill-treated any persons who had the temerity to sign a petition in favour of religious liberty. The latent hostility which has always existed in Great Britain against Rome everywhere burst forth into an active flame. Stout Tories, regaining confidence amidst the surrounding clamour, urged the Government to appeal to the people, and to allow the nation to decide on the policy which it had proposed to Parliament. Westbury and Oxford had sufficiently proved what the results of such an appeal would be.[1]

Agitation in the country.

In the meanwhile the Cabinet had proceeded with one of their proposals. On the 10th of February, Peel, while still member for Oxford, had introduced a bill for the suppression of the Catholic Association. The Ministry did not, however, repeat the mistake which they had committed in 1825, of framing a complicated enactment which it would be impracticable to enforce. They simply proposed to empower the Lord Lieutenant to sup-

The suppression of the Catholic Association.

[1] Roebuck, vol. i. p. 116. *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 907. Sir E. May, in his new work on Democracy in Europe, vol. ii. p. 461, treats the Roman Catholic emancipation as one of the triumphs of Democracy. With due deference to Sir E. May, Democracy had nothing to do with it. It was the triumph of the thinking few over the unthinking many.

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press any association which he might think dangerous to public peace or inconsistent with the due administration of the law. The Opposition did not like the measure. They naturally regarded it as a grave interference with the liberty of the subject. They distrusted the policy of conferring almost absolute power on the Lord Lieutenant. But, though they were nearly unanimous in disliking the bill, they were almost unanimous in refraining from opposing it. In the first place, they were conciliated by the assurance that the measure was to be temporary; and in the next place they were satisfied by the reflection that it would be nugatory. The Association had done its work; the concession of emancipation would inevitably lead to its dissolution; and the dissolution of the Association would leave the Lord Lieutenant nothing to suppress.[1] Liberal members might hesitate to pass a measure empowering a single officer of exalted rank to suppress an association which he might judge dangerous. But they could hardly hesitate to authorise this arrangement for a temporary period, during which there could be no object in maintaining any organisation for political purposes. It was worth while to pay some price for the great boon which ministers were preparing for Ireland, and 'a measure of temporary coercion' was not too high a price to pay for 'a measure of permanent conciliation.' Animated by these feelings the Opposition refrained from opposing the Suppression Bill, and the measure passed through all its stages with a rapidity which was almost unprecedented. Introduced into the House of Commons on the 10th of February, it was read a third time in the House of Lords exactly a fortnight afterwards.[2]

[1] 'Pass a bill,' said Lord Anglesey, 'for putting the Roman Catholics upon a footing of political equality with their Protestant brethren, and I will answer for it you will never hear again of the Catholic Association.'—*Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 31.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xx. pp. 177, 519. See also, for the views of the Opposition, *ibid.*, pp. 206, 291. For the proclamation suppressing the Association, see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 4.

The Suppression Bill had now been passed. The introduction of the Relief Bill was fixed for Thursday, the 5th of March. Forty-eight hours before its introduction Peel received the king's orders to wait upon him. He went accordingly to Windsor, where the king was residing, with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor. The king spoke to them of the pain with which he had given his assent to the measure, and of his desire to receive a more detailed explanation of it. Peel, being more familiar than his colleagues with its details, told the king that it was intended to repeal the declaration against transubstantiation, and to modify the Oath of Supremacy. The king affected the greatest surprise at this announcement. 'You surely cannot intend to modify'—so he protested,—'the ancient Oath of Supremacy?' Peel repeated the decision of the Cabinet, and the king thereupon declared that it was impossible for him to assent to the measure. What course did his ministers propose to take? Peel replied by tendering his own resignation, and by begging the king's permission to state on the morrow that unforeseen circumstances had prevented him from bringing forward the measure that he had announced, and that he was consequently no longer Secretary of State for the Home Department. Wellington and Lyndhurst returned the same answer as Peel. The king expressed regret at the circumstances which had necessitated their retirement, accepted their resignations, kissed them on both cheeks, and sent them away after a five hours' interview with the conviction that they were out of office.

The king withdraws his consent.

The sudden change in the king's views had been due to the active intrigues of the Duke of Cumberland. The Duke of Cumberland was the least reputable and the most unpopular of the king's brothers. With no deep religious convictions of his own, he became the self-constituted champion of the Church, and, from disliking the Duke of Wellington, the intolerant opponent of the

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ministerial measure. Having constant access to the king, he was able to assail him with every argument which was calculated to make an impression on his narrow understanding. The Duke of Cumberland had, however, miscalculated his own power. He had relied on the possibility of the Tories forming a Protestant Administration. An evening's reflection convinced the king that the formation of a Protestant Administration was impracticable, and that he had no alternative but to surrender at discretion. At a late hour of the very day on which he had taken so touching a leave of his three obdurate counsellors he wrote to the Duke of Wellington and begged him to go on. The Duke of Cumberland's intervention had done nothing but afford one more proof of the weak, vacillating character of his unfortunate brother.[1]

The king again gives way.

The vacillations in the king's mind were well known in political circles in London. The Ministry, it was thought, was out; and the great measure of relief abandoned. Men meeting in the street asked one another what would happen; and the friends of religious freedom feared that the victory was already lost which they had fancied that they were on the eve of securing. The doubts which thus oppressed everyone increased the interest felt in the debate. From an early hour on the Thursday morning the avenues to the House of Commons were thronged with an anxious crowd. The moment the doors were opened a rush was made to secure any available seat, while the lobbies were still full of people

[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 349. Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 332. Greville, vol. i. p. 182. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 518. The crisis in the Ministry had really begun in the previous week. The king, on the Thursday, was alarmingly violent with Peel; the Duke pacified him on the Friday. On the Sunday he sent for Lyndhurst, who could do nothing with him, and drove on through the night to Strathfieldsaye. The duke took Windsor on his way to town on the Monday, and again settled matters; but on the Tuesday the king sent for his three ministers. These details will be found in Greville, and are corroborated by Palmerston, who was staying at Strathfieldsaye on the Sunday. The narrative in the text is confined to that portion of the crisis which Peel thought it alone necessary to relate.

who had been unable to find room. Soon after six, Peel rose. The first words of his speech dissipated any misgivings that the king still refused to give way. 'I rise,' he said, 'as a minister of the king, and sustained by the just authority which belongs to that character, to vindicate the advice given to his Majesty by a united Cabinet.'[1] Amidst the cheers which followed this declaration he proceeded to explain the causes which had led to his own change of opinion, and the principles of the measures which he had undertaken to introduce. The Whigs who listened to his statement were delighted to find that the minister who had the courage to give had the wisdom to give ungrudgingly. It was Peel's desire that the measure should be complete, and that it should be fettered by no conditions and no securities. The Roman Catholic was excluded from exercising the delegated authority of the Crown as Viceroy; he was incapacitated from holding the Chancellorship either in Great Britain or in Ireland; and he was disabled from presenting to any benefice or from exercising any influence in any ecclesiastical appointment. But, with these few exceptions, the relief which was given was complete. The Roman Catholic, once for all, was placed on an equality with his Protestant fellow-subject.

Emancipation proposed in Parliament.

The boon was great; but, in one point, Ireland was required to pay for it. The Roman Catholics owed their emancipation to the change which had taken place in Peel's opinions, and this change had been partly attributable to the Clare election. Peel had never recovered from the shock which he had experienced on learning that the forty shilling freeholders had rebelled in a body against their landlords and voted with the priests. 'We must look'—so he argued on the 5th of March—'for real security in the regulation of the elective franchise of Ireland. It is in vain to deny or to conceal the truth in

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 728. Peel's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 350.

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respect to that franchise. It was, until a late period, the instrument through which the landed aristocracy—the resident and the absentee proprietor—maintained their local influence; through which property had its legitimate weight in the national representation. The landlord has been disarmed by the priest; the fear of spiritual denunciation has already severed in some cases, and will sever in others, every tie between the Protestant proprietor and the lower class of his Roman Catholic tenantry. That weapon, which he has forged with so much care, and which he has heretofore wielded with such success, has broken short in his hand.' Actuated by these opinions, Peel proposed that the forty shilling freeholders should be disfranchised, and that the qualification of an elector should be fixed at 10*l.* instead of 2*l.* a year.[1]

The disfranchisement of the forty shilling freeholders.

The great speech in which Peel explained his measures occupied four hours in delivery. The bursts of cheering with which it was continually greeted were heard far beyond the walls of the House in Westminster Hall. The Whigs were delighted with the statement of the minister and with the liberality of his proposals. They agreed, almost unanimously, to support both his measures, and they were loud in applauding the courage of his conduct and the wisdom of his views. Sir Robert Inglis, with the honours of Oxford fresh upon him, ventured to reply to Peel. 'The University of Oxford,' it was remarked, 'should have been there in a body to hear the member whom they' had 'rejected and him whom they' had 'chosen in his place.' Murray, the Colonial Secretary, destroyed the little effect which Inglis's speech had produced, and increased the enthusiasm of the Whigs by the unexpected liberality of his language. The debate was adjourned soon after Murray's speech till the following evening; but the adjourned debate produced nothing except a decisive declaration from Brougham that he

The debate and the victory.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 769.

agreed to the disfranchisement of the forty shilling freeholder 'as the price, as the high price, as the all but extravagant price, of this inestimable good. That price, to obtain that good, he for one would most willingly pay.'[1] This decisive declaration deprived the debate of any further practical interest. The House noisily clamoured for a division, and listened impatiently to a speech in which Peel's younger brother, Jonathan, explained his reasons for differing from the Ministry.[2] At three o'clock on Saturday morning the House divided. The Ministry were in a majority of 348 votes to 160.[3] The friends of religious freedom had secured a decisive victory. The success of the Ministerial measures was assured.

The victory was a great one; but the Ministry had not been able to command the votes of all its members in the division. Lord Lowther, eldest son of the great borough-owner, Lord Lonsdale, was Commissioner of Land Revenue. Lowther voted against his colleagues, and he carried all Lord Lonsdale's representatives with him. Wetherell was Attorney-General. He had been always distinguished for the strength of his Protestant convictions. He had been selected, on Protestant grounds, to oppose Palmerston at Cambridge; and he had displaced Scarlett as Attorney-General on the formation of Wellington's Ministry. Wetherell, like Lowther, voted in the minority. The supporters of the Government anxiously expected the retirement of these unruly spirits from the Administration. Their conduct seemed much less defensible than that of Huskisson in 1828, and it was expected that their resignations would follow their votes as a matter of course. It was commonly reported that Lowther had resigned. Day after day, however passed without any notification of his resignation. Ministers forebore from

Wetherell's attack upon the Ministry.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 836.

[2] Ibid., p. 870. Mr. Jonathan Peel is better known now as General Peel. He made a moderate speech, recommending a dissolution.

[3] Ibid., p. 892

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increasing the difficulties of the situation by pushing their differences with their colleagues to extremities, and Lowther and Wetherell were permitted to retain office without sacrificing their convictions.[1] Wetherell probably owed his own immunity from removal to the duke's consideration for Lord Lonsdale. It was no slight matter for a Prime Minister to quarrel with a nobleman whose nine members had gained him the title of 'the Premier's cat-o'-nine-tails.' Wetherell had no consideration for the duke's forbearance. The second reading of the Relief Bill was fixed for the 17th of March, and he seized the opportunity for indulging in an uncompromising attack on his colleagues. 'He had declined,' he said, 'to draw the bill now on the table of the House because, on looking to the oath which he had taken as Attorney-General, he thought that he should, by drawing that bill, be abjuring his duty and be drawing the death-warrant of the Protestant Church.' 'Was he, then, to blame for refusing to do that which a more eminent adviser of the Crown, only two years ago, declared he would not consent to do? Was he, then, to be twitted, taunted, and attacked? He cared little for being attacked, whether from the right or from the left. Let the attack come from whence it might, he was ready to meet it. He dared them to attack him. He had no speech to eat up. He had no apostasy to explain. He had no paltry subterfuge to resort to. He had not to say a thing was black one day and white another. He was not in one year a Protestant Master of the Rolls and in the next a Catholic Lord Chancellor. He would rather remain where he was, the humble member for Plympton, than be guilty of such contradiction, such unexplainable conversion, such miserable, such contemptible apostasy.'[2]

Wetherell's brutal violence, to quote the epithets applied to his language at the time,[3] had not even the justi-

[1] Greville, vol. i. pp. 185, 187. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xx. pp. 1257, 1263.
[3] Greville, vol. i. p. 191: 'The Attorney-General was violent and brutal.'

fication of truth. Wetherell had not declined to draw the bill from any fear of abjuring himself. He had drawn the measure for the suppression of the Association, though he had been told that it was the prelude of the Relief Bill, and had made no remonstrance. He had continued a member of the Government till the 23rd of February without uttering a single word of warning to any of his colleagues; and, though he had declined to draw the bill on that day, he had not referred in any way to the obligations imposed upon him by his oath.[1] He had kept his temper in the closet, and had reserved his violence for the House. The unseemly attack which he made on his colleagues did not make any material impression on the division. The second reading of the bill was carried by 353 votes to 173.[2] But the size of the ministerial majority could not obliterate the Attorney-General's speech. The anti-Catholic papers described it as the finest oration ever delivered in the House of Commons. Less partial critics declared that the orator was drunk when he made it.[3] Drunk or sober, he had disqualified himself for office. The duke was glad to use the speech as a pretext for distinguishing between Wetherell and the Lowthers, and of ridding himself of the Attorney-General without quarrelling with Lord Lonsdale.[4] Within ten days from his famous philippic Wetherell was dismissed from his office. He was able to oppose the obnoxious measure, in its last stages, as a private member.

He is dismissed from the Attorney-Generalship.

The Attorney-General had been dismissed, but his dismissal afforded a new proof of the embarrassments of the Government. Tindal was Solicitor-General. His own

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 1586.

[2] Ibid., p. 1290.

[3] Greville, vol. i. p. 194. It was on this occasion that the Speaker said of Wetherell, 'The only lucid interval he had was that between his waistcoat and his breeches.'—Ibid.

[4] *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 328. Palmerston humorously says that Nature had made the distinction for the duke between Wetherell and the Lowthers, 'since she had made it out of the question that the said Lowthers should speak.' See also Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 547.

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abilities and long usage designated him as Wetherell's successor. Tindal, however, was member for the University of Cambridge. With the experiences of the Oxford election fresh in their minds, the Ministry did not venture on risking a second contest in the sister University. Best, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and one of the worst Judges on the bench, was made a Peer, and persuaded to retire. Tindal was promoted to his office; Scarlett, who had been dismissed from his Attorney-Generalship, on the formation of the Wellington Ministry, was restored to his old post; and Sugden, who from a very humble origin had already raised himself to a high position at the Bar, was made Solicitor-General. Sugden was one of the four members for Weymouth. Scarlett was member for Peterborough; and the Ministry postponed their appointment till the close of the session, in order that they might avoid the inconvenience of a single unnecessary election during its continuance. They wisely forebore from risking their majority in the House by any avoidable display of their weakness in the constituencies.

Scarlett and Sugden made law officers.

Lord Winchilsea.

The delay in filling up the vacancy which Wetherell's removal had created proved the reluctance of the Government to encounter any isolated election. Nothing but the extreme indecency of the Attorney-General's language would have induced the Duke of Wellington to part with his principal law officer. The duke's forbearance, however, did not mitigate the storm of abuse with which his Ministry was assailed. His principal assailant was the Earl of Winchilsea, a Tory Peer, whose connection with Kent had made him one of the chief speakers at the Pennenden meeting. Lord Winchilsea, during the whole session, had been in a condition of indescribable excitement. He had entirely forgotten the ordinary courtesies of political warfare. On the first evening on which the House of Lords sat he declared that the conduct of Ministers was 'a gross violation of political

rectitude and consistency.'[1] He published immediately afterwards an address to the Protestants of Great Britain, in which he told them that 'the great body of your degenerate senators are prepared to sacrifice, at the shrine of treason and rebellion, that Constitution for which our ancestors so nobly fought and died.'[2] The furious abuse of an exasperated nobleman had no effect on the progress of the measures of the Government. Lord Winchilsea's failure to arrest them increased his anger. A few years before Brougham's exertions had been instrumental in forming the University of London. In 1828 some friends of the Church of England suggested the institution of the King's College, as an antidote to the Liberal principles with which the University was associated. Lord Winchilsea was one of those who had in the first instance joined the new institution. In his blind rage against the Duke of Wellington he persuaded himself that the whole scheme was a fraud. 'I was one of those,' he wrote to the secretary, 'who, at first, thought the proposed plan might be practicable, and prove an antidote to the principles of the London University. . . . Late political events have convinced me that the whole transaction was intended as a blind to the Protestant and High Church party; that the noble duke who had, for some time previous to that period, determined upon breaking in upon the Constitution of 1688, might the more effectually, under the cloak of some outward show of zeal for the Protestant religion, carry on his insidious designs for the infringement of our liberties and the introduction of Popery into every department of the State.'[3]

His letter respecting King's College.

Lord Winchilsea's letter, written on the 14th, was published in the 'Standard' of the 16th of March. The Duke of Wellington, on seeing it, immediately wrote and asked if it were genuine. Lord Winchilsea avowed that

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 14.
[2] Ibid., p. 233.
[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., p. 58. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 526.

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he was the author of it. The duke, therefore, sent Hardinge to the writer demanding an apology. Lord Winchilsea refused to apologise; and the duke then demanded that satisfaction 'which a gentleman has a right to require, and which a gentleman never refuses to give.'

His duel with the Duke of Wellington.

Early on the morning of Saturday, the 21st of March, the two men—one the Prime Minister of England, the other the hot-headed earl—met in Battersea Fields. Hardinge acted as second to the duke, Lord Falmouth as second to Lord Winchilsea. The duellists were placed at fifteen paces from each other. The duke fired first, and without effect. Lord Winchilsea fired in the air. Immediately afterwards he pulled a paper out of his pocket declaring his regret at having unadvisedly published an opinion charging the duke with disgraceful and criminal motives. The affair was thus terminated; and the duke, touching his hat, and wishing everyone good morning, got on his horse and rode away.[1]

The news that the duel had been fought naturally created the greatest astonishment. More than thirty years had passed since a Prime Minister of England had been engaged in a duel. Nearly twenty years had passed since Canning had fought Castlereagh. On two subsequent occasions, indeed, Canning's hasty temperament had involved him in disputes which had nearly led to similar encounters. But, on one of them, Burdett had explained away his offensive language. On the other, the authority of the Speaker had been invoked to part Canning from Brougham. Duelling had, of late years, been going out of fashion, and no one contemplated the possibility of its revival by a Prime Minister. From the first, indeed, Lord Winchilsea's letter had only provoked a laugh against the writer. 'It is a very clever letter,' said George IV.; 'much the wisest thing he ever did.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., pp. 59-63. Greville, vol. i. p. 192. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. pp. 531–545.

He has got back his money. I wish I could find some such pretext to get back mine.'[1] The world, like the king, had laughed at Lord Winchilsea. They thought that the Prime Minister might have joined in the laugh. But, the moment it was known that the duel had been fought, the public to a man blamed the writer whose letter had provoked it. Lord Winchilsea's single act of grace, in firing in the air, did not save him from censure. Opinion was divided on the propriety of the duke's conduct. He was the one man in England, so many thought, who might have ventured on avoiding a combat. He had freely risked his life in the pursuit after Waterloo, gallantly replying to those who had advised him to desist from it, 'Let them fire away—the battle is won, and my life is of no value now.'[2] But the new battle, in which he was engaged in 1829, was not won. The cause of religious freedom depended on his existence—

> Quærat certamen, cui nil, nisi vita, superstes,
> Subdita cui cedit Roma, cavere meum est.[3]

The duke's excuse for his conduct.

The duke cared very little about these criticisms. The duel, in his view, was an inseparable incident from the struggle in which he was engaged. 'It was as necessary to undertake it,' he wrote, 'and to carry it out to the extremity to which I did carry it, as it was to do everything else which I did to attain the object which I had in view. I was living in an atmosphere of calumny. I could do nothing that was not misrepresented, as having some bad purpose in view. If my physician called upon me, it was for treasonable purposes. If I said a word, whether in Parliament or elsewhere, it was misrepresented for the purpose of fixing upon me some gross delusion or falsehood. . . . The courts of justice were shut, and not to open till May. I knew that the bill must pass or be

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 193.

[2] The anecdote will be found in Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 134.

[3] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 611, where the quotation is thus applied.

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lost before the 15th of April. In this state of things Lord Winchilsea published his furious letter. I immediately perceived the advantage it gave me; and I determined to act upon it in such a tone as would certainly put me in the right. Not only was I successful in the execution of my project, but the project itself produced the effect which I looked for and intended it should produce. The atmosphere of calumny, in which I had been for some time living, cleared away. Men were ashamed of repeating what had been told to them. I am afraid that the event itself shocked many good men; but I am certain that the public interests at the moment required that I should do what I did.'[1]

The duke fought his duel on Saturday, the 21st of March. On Monday, the 23rd, the House of Commons resolved itself into a committee on the Relief Bill. An attempt was made to exclude Roman Catholics from sitting in Parliament, but was defeated. On Friday, the 27th of March, the Bill was reported; and on Monday, the 30th of March, it was read a third time and passed. The Government had been supported, at every stage of the bill, by overwhelming majorities. The House, on the 6th of March, had agreed to resolve itself into a committee on the Roman Catholic claims by 348 votes to 160; the second reading of the Relief Bill had been carried, on the 18th of March, by 353 votes to 173; the bill had been passed by 320 votes to 142.[2] It was naturally expected that the decisive majorities by which the measure had been supported in the Commons would have their due influence in the Lords, and these expectations were not disappointed. The Duke of Wellington introduced the Relief Bill in the House of Lords on Tuesday, the 31st of March. The first reading was at once

[1] Buckingham's *Memoirs of Geo. IV.*, vol. ii. p. 397. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 585.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xx. pp. 892, 1290, 1633.

agreed to; and the second reading was fixed for Tuesday, the 2nd of April. The debate which then took place extended over three nights, and the division did not occur till the morning of Sunday, the 5th of April. No one quite knew what the numbers in the division would be. Only a week before it occurred, the king was hoping almost against hope that the measure might be defeated. Closer observers than the king expected that ministers would have a majority of fifty. It was, however, impossible to predict how some of the Peers would vote. Every order of the Peerage was divided against itself. The Duke of Clarence, the heir-presumptive to the throne, was in favour of the measure; the Duke of Cumberland, his next brother, opposed to it. The Primate of England led the Opposition. Lloyd, Bishop of Oxford, replied to the Primate. The Archbishop of Armagh voted with his brother of Canterbury; the Bishops of Derry and Kildare, the only other Irish prelates in the division, voted against him. Ten Bishops supported the Ministry. Nineteen prelates voted against them. When divisions of this character were to be found on the Episcopal Bench, it was difficult to foresee the result of the debate. The Ministry would have been satisfied with a majority of fifty. The majority was more than twice as large. The second reading was carried by 217 votes to 112. The most sanguine partisan had not expected so decisive a victory.[1]

The Relief Bill carried.

The majority virtually settled the matter. The staunchest Protestant saw that he had nothing to hope from the House of Lords. In the succeeding week the bill was passed rapidly through committee; and on Friday, the 13th of April, its third reading was carried by a majority of 213 votes to 109.[2] Lord Eldon made one last speech for the cause which he had so long and so stubbornly defended. It was said that the Duke of Cum-

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 394. Greville, vol. i. pp. 197, 199.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 694.

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berland intended to support Lord Eldon, and to threaten to quit the country, never to return to it, if the king should give his assent to the bill. It was feared, however, that such a declaration would produce so general a cheer that the duke thought better of his purpose.[1] Nothing would have so effectually reconciled the minority to the measure as the knowledge that it would have severed them for ever from the Duke of Cumberland. Stout Tories, unable to rely on the Duke of Cumberland, placed their hopes on the dislike of the king to the bill. It was known that George IV. had been closeted on two recent occasions with Lord Eldon; that he had bitterly complained of the position into which he had been forced by his ministers; and that Lord Eldon thought that he would postpone giving his assent to the measure.[2] Lord Eldon little understood the nature of his master. George IV. was quite ready to be rude to the Peers and Bishops who had voted against his wishes, and to display his rudeness to them in his own house, but he was not ready to undertake an impracticable contest for the sake of the Church. The House of Lords had passed the Relief Bill on the Friday. On the Saturday the duke, as a matter of ordinary course, sent the commission down to Windsor for the king's approval; and, equally as a matter of course, George IV. returned it approved on the Monday. 'After all I had heard in my visits,' wrote Lord Eldon, 'not a day's delay! God bless us, and his Church!'[3]

and receives the Royal assent.

The forty shilling freeholders.

The bill disfranchising the forty shilling freeholders made equal progress. The Opposition did not like it; some of them ventured on opposing it; but the great majority of them accepted the measure as the inevitable price which they had to pay for the Relief Bill. No one put the freeholders' case better than Lord Anglesey.

[1] Buckingham's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 393.
[2] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 87.
[3] Ibid.; Greville, vol. i. p. 204; and Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 580.

'These freeholders,' he said, 'were first created for electioneering purposes. As long as they allowed themselves to be driven to the hustings, like sheep to the shambles, without a will of their own, all was well: not a murmur was heard. But the moment these poor people found out the value of their tenure, the moment they exerted their power constitutionally, that instant they are swept out of political existence.'[1] Lord Anglesey's reasoning may have convinced many Peers that the ministerial measure was a harsh one, but his arguments did not probably affect a single vote. The bill disfranchising the freeholders had passed through all its stages in the House of Commons, side by side with the Relief Bill, during March. It was read a second time in the House of Lords, by 139 votes to 17, on the 6th of April. Four days afterwards it was read a third time and passed.[2]

Parliament separated for its Easter holiday on the 16th of April; it reassembled on the 28th. The House of Lords presented a scene of unusual gaiety. For the first time since the Revolution, Roman Catholic Peers were enabled to take their seats in that assembly. It was known that the Duke of Norfolk, the premier Duke in England, intended to avail himself of his privilege; and many ladies, whose political opinions enabled them to sympathise with the Roman Catholics, were in attendance to witness a scene which was historical. Three Roman Catholic Peers, the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Clifford, and Lord Dormer took the oaths prescribed by the Relief Bill on the 28th of April. Three nights afterwards, Lord Stafford, Lord Petre, and Lord Stourton took their seats.[3] The full consequences of the great measure of the year were already visible in the House of Lords. Six gentlemen of ancient lineage, vast possessions, and undoubted character had been added to

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 400. [2] Ibid., pp. 441, 694.
[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., p. 82.

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that assembly. A considerable time, however, elapsed before the House of Commons was subjected to a similar contagion. The Relief Bill had declared that the new oath was to be taken by 'any person professing the Roman Catholic religion who shall after the commencement of this Act be returned as a member of the House of Commons.' It had, therefore, impliedly excluded the newly-elected member for Clare. The impolicy of such an exclusion seemed manifest to most people. The last thing which the Ministry should have desired was a fresh election in Ireland, and a refusal to allow O'Connell to take his seat must necessarily lead to a fresh election in Clare. If O'Connell were the agitator which the Tories believed him to be he would derive fresh powers of mischief from the refusal. The necessity of appealing to his Irish constituents would almost force him into a career of fresh agitation. The petty pique, moreover, which refused to allow the great Catholic leader to share in the victory which he had won for the Roman Catholics, robbed the concession, which the Ministry and Parliament had decided on making, of half its grace. The decision, in fact, seemed so unaccountable that a few Liberal members desired to propose an amendment to the Relief Bill, and to make the new oath applicable to O'Connell. O'Connell had the good taste and moderation to beg that the amendment might not be moved, and that the success of the great measure might not be jeopardised by the discussion of his own case. His forbearance saved the Ministry from a damaging debate, and the Relief Bill was passed in its original form.[1]

O'Connell arrived in London on the 8th of April. People stared at him as if he were a wild man: they found that there was 'nothing remarkable in his manner, appearance, or conversation;' that he was 'lively, well-bred, and at his ease.' The Irishmen could not have sent

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 398. Greville, vol. i. p. 196.

a better representative. A man who was at once a gentleman, a landlord, a good sportsman, a clever lawyer, a ready speaker, and an excellent talker was the very person to make a favourable impression on the mixed society of the metropolis.[1] He attended the Levée at the end of April, and behaved like a gentleman—which it was more than it was possible to say of his sovereign on the same occasion[2]—and he quietly waited till the 15th of May without making any effort to claim the seat to which he was, at any rate, morally entitled. In the meanwhile a Roman Catholic had taken his seat in the House of Commons. The Duke of Norfolk had great influence in Horsham; and the duke desired, after the passage of the Relief Bill, to obtain a seat for his eldest son, Lord Surrey. Hurst, one of the members for the borough, retired, and Lord Surrey was duly elected in his place.[3] The Duke of Norfolk had been the first Roman Catholic Peer admitted to one House, Lord Surrey was the first Roman Catholic Commoner admitted to the other. After Lord Surrey's admission, on the 15th of May, O'Connell himself attended at the House, and applied to be sworn. The gallery and the lobby were full of people anxious to learn the result of the unusual application. O'Connell was introduced by Lord Duncannon, the member for Kilkenny, and by Lord Ebrington, the eldest son of Lord Fortescue, the member for Tavistock. The clerk at the table tendered him the Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, and Abjuration. O'Connell expressed his readiness to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration, but declined to take the Oath of Supremacy, claiming, however, to be allowed to take the oath set forth in the Relief Act. The Speaker, ruling that the new Act was not applicable to a member elected before it became law, desired him

O'Connell claims his seat for Clare.

[1] Daunt's recollections of O'Connell give a good insight into his character. Daunt is a bad imitator of Boswell.

[2] Eldon, vol. iii. p. 88. Greville, vol. i. p. 206.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Chron., p. 207.

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to withdraw. Brougham immediately moved that he 'be called back and heard at the table.' Peel, declaring that the point was a new one, pressed for an adjournment. Charles Wynn, supporting Brougham, contended that O'Connell was entitled to be heard either at the table or at the bar. The debate was ultimately adjourned till the following Monday, the 18th of May, when Peel himself, accepting the compromise which Wynn had suggested, moved that O'Connell 'be heard, by himself, his counsel, or his agents, at the bar.' The House concurred with its leader, and O'Connell was immediately called in.

His speech at the bar of the House.

No one, either in Great Britain or Ireland, enjoyed a higher reputation for popular oratory than the great Irish agitator. But popular oratory does not necessarily qualify a speaker for success in the House of Commons. The arts which please a mob are displeasing to an educated assembly; and it was, therefore, generally thought that O'Connell would fail in Parliament. The expectations and hopes of his friends and opponents were signally disappointed. 'His whole demeanour was a happy mixture of dignity, respect, and ease.' He addressed himself to the reason, and not to the passions, of his audience. He surprised the House, moreover, by the unexpected strength of his argument. The Act of Union had required that, until the Parliament of the United Kingdom should otherwise provide, every member of the House of Commons should take the oaths and subscribe the declaration required by law. The Act of Union had, however, imposed no penalty on the member who omitted to comply with this provision, and Parliament had 'otherwise' provided by passing the Relief Bill. The spirit of the Relief Bill, moreover, was, O'Connell contended, in favour of his claim; and, though the words of one of the sections of that Act apparently excluded a Roman Catholic elected before it had become law, another section expressly conceded to Roman Catholics the right to hold,

exercise, and enjoy all civil and military offices, and to exercise any other franchise or civil right on taking the oath prescribed in the Relief Bill. O'Connell, then, contended that there was nothing in the Act of Union which prevented his taking his seat, and that the spirit of the Relief Bill favoured his claim. His argument was not unanswerable. Scarlett and other lawyers succeeded in showing that the Act which Parliament had just passed could not fairly bear the construction which O'Connell had put upon it; and that the House had no alternative but to enforce the law and exclude the great agitator from his seat. Even, however, the lawyers in the House were not unanimous in this view; while the Whigs were agreed in thinking that a measure avowedly of relief ought to receive the most liberal interpretation possible. The friends of Lord Grenville and the friends of Huskisson adopted the same view, and opposed the Ministry in the subsequent division. The Tories, however, rallied in support of the Government and the letter of the law, and declined to yield to O'Connell's arguments. O'Connell refused to take the Oath of Supremacy, as 'it contained one proposition which he knew to be false, and another proposition which he believed to be untrue;' and the House, adhering to its decision, ordered the Speaker to make out a new writ for Clare.[1]

The new election for Clare.

An act of relief had been robbed of half its grace by the decision. The policy of temporarily refusing O'Connell the fruits of his victory was so miserable that men refused to believe that the Ministry had originated it. The exclusion was universally set down as the work of the king;[2] and the Government were absolved from the unpopularity attending it. The House of Commons had, perhaps, never arrived at a more unfortunate decision. All that they had done was to exclude O'Connell from taking his seat during the few weeks which the session

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. pp. 1400, 1458, 1460, 1531. [2] Greville, vol. i. p. 208.

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of 1829 had still to run. The price which they had to pay for his temporary exclusion was enormous. Its invitable consequence was a fresh election for Clare. A fresh election for Clare involved a new triumph for O'Connell and fresh difficulties for the British Government. The Roman Catholic Association had been suppressed. O'Connell's election was made the excuse for 'an aggregate meeting of Catholics.' The aggregate meeting, which was nothing but a revival of the Association under another name, took upon itself to vote 5,000*l.* of the Catholic Rent for the purposes of the election. No candidate dared to oppose the successful agitator who had emancipated the Roman Catholics of Ireland; but O'Connell went from village to village addressing the masses who thronged from all sides to hear him. His own disposition, the applause of the populace, the excitement of his immediate friends, would have made it impossible for him under such circumstances to have satisfied himself with thankfulness for the past. The petty spite with which he had been personally treated absolved him from every feeling of gratitude. He proceeded from meeting to meeting, not to enlarge on the victory which had been won, but to enrol support for a new campaign. He undertook to restore the franchise to the forty shilling freeholders. He undertook the repeal of the Union.[1]

Fresh disturbances in Ireland.

Parliament had succeeded in excluding O'Connell from the House of Commons for a few weeks in the summer of 1829. It had in consequence to deal with a fresh agitation, eminently calculated to influence the excitable temperament of the Irish. It happened, moreover, that various circumstances, with which O'Connell had no direct connection, disposed the Irish to riot and disorder in the summer of 1829. The people, multiplying with extraordinary rapidity, were miserably poor. A period of dull trade had diminished the demand for Irish

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Hist., p. 125.

labour; and large masses of the population were either without work or eking out a miserable subsistence on the scantiest wages. The poorer classes, moreover, had gained little or nothing from the great measure of relief which had been just passed. The Roman Catholic cottier had been deprived of his vote; the Protestant had been deprived of his supremacy. The Protestants, irritated at the concessions of the Ministry, resolved on celebrating the 12th of July with the usual rejoicings. The Roman Catholics, elated by their recent victory, decided on stopping the celebrations. Protestant and Catholic seized such weapons as they could find to enforce their respective determinations. Men with weapons in their hands soon find opportunities for using them. An Orange procession in Armagh was attacked by the Roman Catholics, and ten men were killed before the battle ceased. In Fermanagh the Roman Catholics, after defeating a body of Orangemen who had the temerity to interfere with them, encamped on some high land and drew reinforcements from the neighbouring counties of Cavan and Leitrim. The condition of Munster was almost as serious. A pitched battle, in which one Protestant was killed and seven were wounded, took place in Clare. The magistrates of Tipperary declared their inability to preserve the peace, and called on Government for the renewal of the Insurrection Act. Nothing but the activity of the military and the police prevented the commencement of civil war. Protestants guilty of killing Roman Catholics were acquitted, as a matter of course, by Protestant juries. Disorder and lawlessness existed from one end of Ireland to the other.[1]

Distress in Great Britain.

Under ordinary circumstances the disturbed state of Ireland would have occupied the attention of every British statesman. In 1829 a danger nearer home made the condition of Ireland appear of comparatively small

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1829, Hist., p. 129; and Chron., pp. 123, 135, 144, 156.

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importance. Great Britain had never recovered from the effects of the crisis of 1825. All classes of the population had suffered from it. Trade had been dull; manufacturing operations had been discouraged; and the rate of wages had been almost universally reduced. The agriculturists had participated in the universal distress. In March 1828 Knatchbull, the member for Kent, told Lord Colchester that all the farmers in the county were insolvent.[1] A bad season increased the difficulty. Everyone was retrenching his expenditure; and economies which were almost universally practised naturally discouraged manufacturing operations. The manufacturers found it necessary to close their business or to lower the wages they were paying. The rate of wages in some trades fell to a pitiably low sum. In April 1829 the silk weavers of Somersetshire were dragging 'on a miserable existence on two shillings and sixpence a week; just enough,' so it was added, to give them 'salt and potatoes.'[2] It was, perhaps, natural that the silk weavers should suffer especially from the state of things around them. The silk trade had been revolutionised by the legislation of 1825, and had been stimulated into unnatural activity. Silk, however, was one of the first articles which a person bent on economy could dispense with. It was not absolutely necessary for any woman to wear a silk gown; and a farmer who told his landlord that he was insolvent was not likely to buy a silk dress for his wife to wear on Sunday. Immediately after the period at which prosperity had encouraged and legislation had promoted the silk trade, the demand for silk goods fell off. The manufacturers of Spitalfields, of Rochdale, and of Taunton found their business no longer profitable, and were compelled to reduce the wages of their workpeople.

Over-production in 1825, a diminution in the de-

[1] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 552. [2] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 596.

mand for silk in 1828, accounted for the stagnant condition of the silk trade. Manufacturers and working men, however, suffering from the effects of the crisis were not likely to attribute it to so simple a cause as the over-production of their own looms or the poverty of their usual customers. Distress had followed Huskisson's legislation, and the destruction of the silk trade was almost everywhere ascribed to the novel commercial policy of the Government. The French, it was insisted, were underselling us in our own markets; and nothing but an immediate return to the old system of protection could save the British manufacturer from ruin and the British artizan from the workhouse or starvation. Fyler, one of the members for Coventry, a borough in which more than four thousand persons were out of work, brought the subject before the House of Commons on the 13th of April. Fyler pressed for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the state of the silk trade. He avowedly desired to return to the old system of protection which Huskisson had abandoned. The Protectionists mustered in Fyler's support with unusual confidence. Huskisson was no longer in office; the Duke of Wellington had never shown any zeal for free trade; and Fitzgerald, the new President of the Board of Trade, had little or no acquaintance with commercial subjects. Every condition, therefore, seemed to be favourable to an onslaught on Huskisson's system. Unfortunately for the Protectionists, Fitzgerald, though he had entered his office without any definite opinions on commercial subjects, had 'by great diligence and application'[1] mastered the principles on which Huskisson had acted, and convinced himself of their propriety. He rose immediately after Fyler's motion had been seconded, but he rose to deprecate its adoption. The success of the motion would confirm the opinion which was unluckily prevalent, that Parlia-

The Protectionists ascribe the distress of the country to Huskisson's policy.

[1] Greville, vol. i. p. 261.

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ment was contemplating some modification in its policy, and would, therefore, increase the uncertainty into which the trade had already been thrown. For his part, he was convinced that excessive duties only held out irresistible temptations to the smuggler, and that the British manufacturer in reality required protection against the contraband and not against the legitimate trade. Instead of increasing the duties, therefore, in accordance with the wish of the manufacturers, he proposed to reduce them, and thus inflict one more blow on the contraband trade.[1]

Riots in the manufacturing districts.

Fitzgerald's speech made the impression on the weavers which Balaam's famous prediction produced on Balak. They had relied on him to curse Huskisson's policy, and he had blessed it. They had besought him to raise the duties on foreign silks, and he had promised to reduce them. Four thousand looms were already idle in Coventry. A manufacturer declared that, if Fitzgerald's proposal were carried into effect, he would throw two hundred others out of work. A meeting was held at Macclesfield on the 23rd of April to petition Parliament against Fitzgerald's bill. The starving operatives who attended it were excited by the inflammatory language which was addressed to them. The largest manufacturers in the town unfortunately announced a further reduction in the rate of wages. The announcement, made to men whose passions were already aroused, produced mischievous consequences. On Monday, the 27th of April, a mob of men and boys assembled in the market-place and commenced destroying the factory of the obnoxious manufacturer. On the same day the weavers of Rochdale broke into a few factories, in which some workmen who had transgressed the rules of their union were employed; destroyed the shuttles; and beat the men who were at work. Towards the end of the month Manchester and other

[1] The debate, which will be found in *Hansard*, vol. xxi. pp. 744–867, extended over two nights.

places were the scene of similar disturbances. In May riots broke out in the metropolis, and the weavers of Bethnal Green resorted to deplorable acts of violence. Ten years had passed since England had been the theatre of so much disorder.

The state of Bethnal Green.

These disturbances were unfortunately capable of an easy explanation. The silk weavers were suffering from a distress which it was almost impossible to exaggerate. 'A man came yesterday from Bethnal Green with an account of that district,' wrote Greville, a few months afterwards. 'They are all weavers, forming a sort of separate community; there they are born; there they live and labour; and there they die. They neither migrate nor change their occupation; they can do nothing else. They have increased in a ratio at variance with any principles of population, having nearly tripled in twenty years—from 22,000 to 64,000. They are for the most part out of employment, and can get none. 1,100 are crammed into the poor-house, five or six in a bed; 6,000 receive parochial relief. The parish is in debt; every day adds to the number of paupers and diminishes that of ratepayers. These are principally shopkeepers, who are beggared by the rates. The district is in a state of insolvency and hopeless poverty, yet they multiply; and, while the people look squalid and dejected, as if borne down by wretchedness and destitution, the children thrive and are healthy.'[1] There was no great difficulty in producing disturbances amongst a population afflicted with the misery which oppressed the weavers of Bethnal Green. For a moment the manufacturers hoped that the occurrence of disorder would induce the Ministry to withdraw their proposal. Disturbances had the contrary effect, and stimulated the Cabinet to hasten the passage of the bill. 'The interests of the manufacturers, the interests of the workmen themselves, and the public

[1] Greville, vol. ii. p. 261.

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tranquillity,' said Peel, 'called for the immediate passing of the bill. The outrages which had lately taken place were, he knew, perpetrated for the purpose of intimidating the Legislature against agreeing to this measure; and he was convinced that every day it was delayed would add to the number of these outrages.' The House did not venture to resist an appeal thus solemnly made to it. Notwithstanding the opposition of the manufacturers, Fitzgerald's bill was passed through its remaining stages and became law.[1]

The distress of the labouring classes.

Free trade had won a new victory; but free trade was powerless to remove the distress which was afflicting almost every class of the community. A bad harvest aggravated the condition of the agricultural classes, and added one more element of evil to the general suffering. 'I saw a friend who had recently returned from one of the largest districts in the country,' said a member of Parliament in February 1830, who told us 'both masters and workmen were fast coming down to despair. I know that labourers perform most painful works, and that, after fourteen hours of hard and constant labour, they can only earn to maintain themselves a few shillings, utterly insufficient. The retail dealers are sinking into distress for want of customers, and are unable to pay rates, rent, or taxes, and trade is altogether unprofitable. Wretchedness, ruin, and misery swallow up all in their vortex. Every week in the Gazette is a long list of bankrupts and a longer list of declared insolvents.' 'In one district of the county of Warwick,' said Fyler, a few days afterwards, 'there was a parish containing a mixture of manufacturers and agriculturists. The population amounted to seven thousand one hundred persons. Of these there were two thousand receiving parochial relief, two thousand one hundred not receiving relief, but not

[1] 10th George IV., c. 23. Peel's declaration is in *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 1161.

able to contribute anything to the rates, the whole weight of which was borne by five hundred heads of families, the representatives of the other inhabitants.' 'A very large portion of the working classes,' said a third member, 'were approaching to starvation. They wanted food and clothing; the best workmen could not find employment, or were obliged to apply to charitable distributions of food to eke out their existence. The large farmer was reduced to a small farmer, the small farmer was becoming a labourer, and the labourer was becoming a pauper.'[1] In the Vale of Aylesbury, one of the richest agricultural districts in England, the poor rates amounted to thirty shillings an acre. In the parish of Mereworth the rates reached 40*l.* of the whole rental; and out of 1,900 persons residing in a single parish in Somersetshire there were 1,000 paupers. In Barnsley the wages of the working classes averaged only twentypence a week. In Sussex the labourers were employed on the roads at fourpence and threepence a day. In Huddersfield the people did not on an average earn more than twopence daily. Labour was so cheap and so abundant that the men were employed to do the work of horses and oxen. In Hampshire and Cheshire peasants could be frequently seen harnessed to wagons, 'degraded to the labour of brutes.' In Somersetshire the Bishop of Bath and Wells declared that he had beheld numbers of his fellow-men 'yoked together like oxen and engaged in drawing coals from the pits in the neighbourhood.' Men, reduced to the utmost distress, gladly performed the vilest and the hardest labour for the sake of a miserable wage.[2]

The speech from the throne in 1830.

All classes of the community were oppressed with the terrible distress which they were either experiencing themselves or witnessing around them. When Parliament met, on the 4th of February, 1830, the country

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. pp. 88, 158, 234.
[2] Ibid., pp. 932, 959, 961, 996, 1008.

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gentlemen were longing to discover some means for alleviating the misery which was shocking to their feelings, and which their diminished rent-rolls disabled them from relieving. They expected that the speech from the throne would reflect their own feeelings. The speech from the throne declared that 'his Majesty laments that, notwithstanding the indication of active commerce, distress should prevail among the agricultural and manufacturing classes in some parts of the United Kingdom. It would be most gratifying to the paternal feelings of his Majesty to be enabled to propose measures calculated to relieve the difficulties of any portion of his subjects, and at the same time compatible with the general and permanent interests of his people. It is from a deep solicitude for those interests that his Majesty is impressed with the necessity of acting with extreme caution in reference to this important subject. His Majesty feels assured that you will concur with him in assigning due weight to the effect of unfavourable seasons, and to the operation of other causes which are beyond the reach of legislative control or remedy. Above all his Majesty is convinced that no pressure of temporary difficulty will induce you to relax the determination which you have uniformly manifested to maintain inviolate the public credit, and thus to uphold the high character and the permanent welfare of the country.'

which increases the unpopularity of the Ministry.

These cold and guarded phrases created the greatest sensation in Parliament. The king had declared the distress to be partial. The country gentlemen, arriving one after another, each with heartrending accounts from his own neighbourhood, were convinced that it was general. The king had implied that it was due to unfortunate seasons; the country gentlemen were unanimous in ascribing it to the commercial legislation of the Government. The king had recommended caution in dealing with it; the country gentlemen had persuaded themselves

that instant action was necessary. The dispassionate advice of the speech seemed, therefore, tame and unwise to their excited feelings. The Administration, moreover, was everywhere regarded as a Tory Government with Whig opinions. The Ministry, which had been placed in office to maintain the connection between Church and State, had repealed the Test Act and emancipated the Roman Catholics; and extreme Tories, reflecting on these events, thought themselves absolved from any further allegiance to Wellington and Peel. The aspect of the House of Commons on the first night of the session did not diminish the irritation of the country gentlemen. The address was moved by Lord Darlington. Lord Darlington was the eldest son of Lord Cleveland. Lord Cleveland had all his life been a zealous Whig; he had brought Brougham into Parliament for Winchilsea; his eldest son had, for seventeen years, been a silent supporter of the Opposition. Lord Cleveland, however, considered that the progress of time had made such great changes both in men and measures that he was bound to pass over to the Ministerial ranks. Lord Cleveland's conduct was annoying to the Whigs, but it could not be particularly satisfactory to the Tories. They might well consider whether the change in men and measures which had induced Lord Cleveland to pass over to the Government did not equally compel them to withdraw their support from it.

First attacks on the Government.

The irritation of the Tories was visible at the opening of the session. Years had passed since an amendment had been proposed to the address. It had always been voted in the form in which the Ministry had worded it, and it had always re-echoed the speech from the throne. For the first time since the conclusion of the war the debate on the address was made the pretext for an attack upon the Government. In the House of Lords, Lord Stanhope, a Tory peer, strongly opposed to the resumption

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of cash payments and to Huskisson's commercial policy, declared that 'a speech more inept and more inappropriate was never delivered from the throne,' and moved an amendment to the address. Opposition Peers, thinking that Lord Stanhope's amendment pointed to a return to a paper currency, passed over to the Government, and Lord Stanhope was defeated by a large majority.[1] His amendment, however, had enabled the extreme Tories to display their hostility towards the Ministry.

A much more serious attack was made in the House of Commons. Knatchbull, the member for Kent, a country gentleman of Tory views, proposed an amendment, lamenting the distress, declaring it to be general, and assuring his Majesty that the time of the House should be employed to alleviate and remove it. The amendment was very nearly proving fatal to the Duke of Wellington's Ministry. All the extreme Tories supported Knatchbull. Brougham, Althorp, and the moderate Whigs voted against the Government. Huskisson and the remnant of Canning's friends ranged themselves on the same side. O'Connell, who made his first speech on the occasion, supported the amendment. The Ministerial whips thought that the Ministry would be in a minority; and the Government was only saved from defeat by the sudden advent of an unexpected assistance. Lord Howick, the eldest son of Lord Grey, doubted the expediency of turning out the Duke of Wellington.[2] He had never forgiven Brougham for supporting Canning in 1827.[3] He had no confidence in Huskisson; and he thought that the services which the duke had rendered in the previous year entitled him to a fair trial. He rose towards the close of the debate and declared that

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. pp. 10, 55.

[2] Lord Howick's vote may perhaps have been influenced by the fact that he, like Brougham, owed his seat in Parliament to Lord Cleveland. Unlike Brougham, however, he had not made up his mind to resign his seat in consequence of the change in his patron's opinions.

[3] Roebuck, vol. i. p. 138, note.

he should support the Ministry. Hume and other Reformers followed Lord Howick into the lobby. The Ministry was, in this way, saved from defeat, and obtained a majority of 158 votes to 105.[1]

The division proved that the Ministry had no influence with the Tories, and that its existence depended on their forbearance. The Tories, on their part, showed little inclination to abstain from attacking the Government. Lord Blandford, the eldest son of the Duke of Marlborough, was member for his father's borough of Woodstock. He was a Tory; he regarded the Roman Catholic Relief Bill with abhorrence. So long as rotten boroughs were purchasable in the open market wealthy Roman Catholics would be always able to find seats for themselves or for their representatives; and special precautions were, therefore, necessary to prevent what Lord Blandford called 'the accumulation of Roman Catholic power' in Parliament. Towards the close of the session of 1829 Lord Blandford had moved some resolutions declaring that the existence of rotten boroughs was prejudicial to the best interests of the country. He had been beaten by a large majority.[2] He renewed his proposition at the commencement of 1830. The Whigs, however, were unprepared to support any project of Reform. The Reformers themselves thought the motion premature; and Lord Blandford's resolutions were rejected by a large majority.[3] But the debate gave ministers one more warning that they could place no dependence on their nominal supporters, and that their existence could at any moment be terminated by a combination of Tories, Whigs, and Radicals against them.

Lord Blandford's motion for Reform.

Such a combination seemed every day more probable. On the 25th of February, Lord Stanhope proposed that

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 120. Roebuck, vol. i. p. 138, compared with Spencer, p. 234, note; and Greville, vol. i. p. 275.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xxi. p. 1688.

[3] Ibid., vol. xxii. p. 178.

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the Lords should resolve themselves into a committee of the whole House on the internal state of the nation. Lord Stanhope, however, did not receive the support which he expected. The Whigs, still distrusting his views upon the currency, hesitated to commit themselves to an inquiry which might possibly lead to an alteration in the Act of 1819. The extreme Tories, left to themselves, were defeated by a large majority.[1] On the 18th of March the Duke of Richmond, reviving Lord Stanhope's motion in another form, moved for the appointment of a select committee on the internal state of the country, more particularly with respect to the condition of the working classes. There was very little difference in principle between the proposal which Lord Stanhope had made in February and the motion which the Duke of Richmond made in March. Both were opposed by the Ministry. But, in the three weeks' interval between the two propositions, a section of the Whigs had allied themselves with the extreme Tories. The Ministry was again in a majority; but the minority was swelled by the votes of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland, and other Whigs.[2] A motion similar to Lord Stanhope's made in the House of Commons led to a discussion which was protracted over four nights, but which resulted in a fresh triumph to the Government. The House decided by a very large majority to refuse an inquiry.[3]

Motions in the House of Lords,

and in the House of Commons.

The Ministry had thus succeeded in resisting inquiry into the state of the nation. Parliament had shrunk from an investigation, which seemed capable, if it were once commenced, of almost indefinite extension. The mass of the Whigs had refrained from committing themselves to a proceeding which extreme Tories openly regarded as a first step towards the reconsideration of the financial and

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 1000.

[2] The majority was 141 to 61. The division on Lord Stanhope's motion had been 118 to 25. *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 538.

[3] 255 votes to 87. *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 827.

commercial legislation of Huskisson and Peel. But the same objections could not be urged to another class of motions which were brought against the Government. Sir James Graham was born in 1792; he succeeded to his father's baronetcy in 1824. His father had lived and died a Tory. But Graham, moulding his own opinions upon the writings of Adam Smith, and contracting an acquaintance with a few earnest Whigs, adopted Liberal principles. He was returned in the Liberal interest, in 1818, for Hull; in 1820, for St. Ives. Threatened with a petition, and shrinking from the expense of a contest before a Grenville committee, he retired almost immediately afterwards from the House of Commons, and for the next few years devoted himself to the improvement of his estate, and to the study of economical questions. In 1826 he again entered Parliament as Member for Carlisle. The commencement of his Parliamentary career was remarkable for many disappointments. He failed in debate, and showed little promise of his future eminence in the House of Commons. His friends gave him more credit for industry than for ability, and thought that he owed more to his acquaintance with Lord Grey than to his own talents. His subsequent career disproved the truth of their conjectures. The man who had been regarded as vain and self-sufficient rose to the first rank in the House of Commons.[1]

Sir James Graham.

On the 12th of February, Graham moved for a general reduction of salaries in all the establishments of the country. During the twenty years in which cash payments had been suspended the public servants had persuaded the Government to raise their pay. The fall in Bank paper had reduced the purchasing value of each pound, and had, therefore, justified, or even necessitated, a revision of salaries. But the circumstances which had made

His motion for the reduction of salaries.

[1] Torrens' *Sir J. Graham*, vol. i. pp. 81–236. Greville, vol. ii. p. 90. Roebuck, vol. i. p. 148. Spencer, p. 241, note.

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a general increase of salaries indispensable had disappeared after the passing of Peel's Act. Bank paper was thenceforward changeable at par; the purchasing value of each pound was restored to its old level, and there was no longer, therefore, any justification for the arbitrary increase of the salaries of public servants. The augmentation, Graham contended, 'should be revised, and every possible reduction effected which can be made without the violation of existing engagements, and without detriment to the public service.' Graham's argument was so forcible that the Government did not venture on directly opposing his motion. They put up Dawson, the Secretary to the Treasury, to propose an amendment to it pledging the House to every possible saving. Graham expressed himself satisfied with this amendment, and withdrew his own proposal.[1] The majority of the Opposition were also willing to wait and see what the Ministry intended to do. Hume, however, characteristically desired to enforce the moral of the debate in a renewed discussion. On the 15th of February, three days after the adoption of Dawson's amendment, he proposed a repeal and modification of taxation to the largest possible extent which the reductions would admit. The debate which ensued degenerated into a discussion on the currency. But the recollection of Dawson's amendment saved the Government from defeat and gave them a large majority.[2]

Hume's motion for the reduction of taxation.

These successive motions convinced the Ministry that it was necessary to lose no time in explaining their own proposals of retrenchment. On the 19th of February, four days after the defeat of Hume's motion, Goulburn rose to redeem the pledge of the Ministry, and to explain the economies on which the Government had determined. Large savings were, of course, difficult to effect. Neither

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 478.
[2] 184 votes to 62 (*Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 527).

the Ministry nor the Legislature had practically any control over the greater portion of the national expenditure. Nearly two-thirds of the expenditure of the State were due to the charge of the debt and to the Consolidated Fund; and the supply services, which were alone susceptible of retrenchment, only required about 17,600,000*l.* a year. A portion of this sum, moreover, was due to the remuneration of services which had been rendered in the past, and which the Legislature could not consistently with good faith refuse to recognise. The Ministry, therefore, found themselves crippled at every turn in their efforts to economise. But they considered that they could reduce the estimates by 1,031,985*l.*[1] A reduction of the interest on Exchequer bills and other small economies would, it was hoped, increase the gross saving to about 1,300,000*l.*

Goulburn's measure of retrenchment.

The savings which the Ministry thus promised to effect did not equal the retrenchments which men like Hume, free from the responsibilities of office, had thought possible. But they were much greater than the House had expected. A few members doubted their sufficiency, but most members expressed their gratification at Goulburn's announcement, and their readiness to adopt it. The Opposition, though they accepted the ministerial proposals as a whole, did not, however, cease their efforts to effect other small savings. Colonel Davies proposed that the supplies should be voted for only six months instead of for a year; and Hume, proposing a reduction of 10,000 men in the number of the army, was persuaded by Lord Althorp to alter his motion and limit

[1] The reductions were as follows:—

Army Estimates	453,146
Navy	272,939
Miscellaneous	276,900
Ordnance	29,000
Total	£1,031,985

—*Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 751.

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his reduction to 5,000. Davies was beaten by 225 votes to 93; Hume by 167 votes to 57.[1] But these divisions, occurring on the very night on which the Ministry had announced their own proposals, afforded a decisive proof of the temper by which the economists were animated, and of the little forbearance which they intended to extend to the Ministry.

Vesey Fitzgerald's illness.

The spirit which animated the Opposition was displayed in a more striking manner shortly afterwards. Vesey Fitzgerald, who had been President of the Board of Trade and Treasurer of the Navy since Grant's retirement in 1828, was seized with a serious illness at the close of 1829. He complained bitterly of overwork in December, and was so ill at the end of the year that his recovery was doubtful. He was compelled to retire from his office; and Herries, who had been reposing for two years in the easiest of situations, the Mint, was selected to succeed him. Wellington endeavoured to secure the aid of the Grenvillites by offering the Mint to Lord Chandos, the eldest son of the Duke of Buckingham. Chandos, however, refused the appointment, and Herries was persuaded to retain the Mint in addition to his new office. The Ministry had still to dispose of Fitzgerald's second office, the Treasurership of the Navy. The Opposition thought that the proper way of disposing of it was to dispense with it altogether. The Ministry declined to abolish the situation, but reduced the salary attached to it from 3,000*l.* to 2,000*l.* a year,[2] and appointed to it Frankland Lewis, the member for Radnorshire. Lewis was a politician of some experience and much knowledge. He had already served the Crown in a subordinate capacity, and he had only retired from the Ministry with Huskisson and Grant in 1828.[3] His ap-

The Treasurership of the Navy.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. pp. 791, 794.
[2] Ibid., vol. xxii. p. 1123.
[3] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 477.

pointment did not add much strength to the Government, and it exposed them to a damaging attack. Graham declared that it was at variance with the pledge which they had given to effect every possible economy, and proposed a resolution condemning it.[1] The Whigs, however, refrained from giving Graham any collective support, and he was beaten by a large majority.[2]

The Ordnance Office.

This defeat did not discourage Graham from attempting a further attack on the Government. The Ordnance Office had an establishment which was peculiarly open to criticism. It was represented in Parliament by one Peer and seven Commoners. The Master-General, Lord Beresford, was a Peer; the Lieutenant-General, Lord R. Somerset, was member for Gloucestershire; the Surveyor-General, Sir H. Fane, was member for Sandwich; the Storekeeper, Colonel Trench, was member for Cambridge; the Clerk, Spencer Perceval, was member for Newport; the Clerk of the Deliveries, General Phipps, was member for Scarborough; the Secretary to the Master-General, Mr. Holmes, was member for Bishop's Castle; and the Treasurer, Lord Downes, was member for Queenborough. No other department in the Government enjoyed so formidable an array of representatives in Parliament; and economists naturally concluded that, among so many placemen, there must be some redundant officials. The Finance Committee of 1828 had endorsed this view, and, in opposition to Wellington's express opinion, had recommended the suppression of the Lieutenant-General. On the 29th of March, Graham endeavoured to give effect to the recommendation of the committee by striking the salary of the Lieutenant-General out of the estimates. He was, however, again unsuccessful. The Ministry, sheltering themselves under the high authority of their chief, defeated the proposal by 200 votes to 124.[3]

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 256. [2] 188 votes to 90 (ibid., 295).
[3] Ibid., vol. xxiii. p. 1044.

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Other motions of the economists.

Nearly all the other motions made during the session by the economists met with a similar fate. A proposal to reduce the salary of the Secretary to the Treasury was defeated by 178 votes to 106.[1] An attack on the expenditure incurred by the missions to South America was stopped by 118 votes to 99.[2] An attempt to reduce the cost of consular establishments was defeated by 121 votes to 98.[3] The economists were only able to enforce their views on two occasions. In the course of 1826 Robert Dundas, a son of Lord Melville, had been appointed Commissioner of the Navy; and William Bathurst, a son of Lord Bathurst, Commissioner of the Victualling Department. Lord Bathurst and Lord Melville had already received considerable rewards for the services which they had rendered to the public. Lord Bathurst was a Teller of the Exchequer and a Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. Lord Melville was Keeper of the Privy Seal in Scotland. One of these high officials received nearly 4,000*l.* a year, the other of them nearly 3,000*l.* a year, for doing nothing. In 1826 their sons William and Robert were appointed Commissioners of the Navy Board and Victualling Department. The Commissionerships were redundant offices, and were accordingly selected, in 1830, for reduction. The Treasury, however, rewarded the short service of the sinecurists with pensions of 500*l.* and 400*l.* a year. The Ministry warmly defended their conduct in doing so. The Treasury, they declared, had only applied to Bathurst and Dundas the rule which was ordinarily applicable to every Civil servant. The Opposition, however, contended that no rule could be applicable to the son of a sinecurist appointed by his father's interest to a redundant office. The personal questions involved in the motion aided them in the division. Tory members,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiv. p. 526. [2] Ibid., vol. xxv. p. 45. [3] Ibid., p. 282.

angry with their chiefs, were not sorry to obtain an opportunity of this character for displaying their resentment. The pensions were struck out of the estimates by 139 votes to 121.[1] One of the two sinecurists had no reason to regret the vote of the evening. A few months later on Buller, one of the Clerks of the Council, died, and Lord Bathurst bestowed the office on his son William.

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The division in which these pensions was rejected was the only one in which the Ministry actually suffered defeat. But, on another occasion, they only avoided a reverse by a timely surrender. It has been stated in a previous chapter that the House of Commons had decided, in 1824, on spending a sum of 300,000*l.* on the repairs of Windsor. The vote, at the time, had been popular; but the reckless extravagance with which the repairs were made soon alarmed the economists. The estimate was gradually raised from 300,000*l.* to 640,000*l.*; from 640,000*l.* to 800,000*l.*; and a further 100,000*l.* was required in 1830. The king, however, was lying dangerously ill in Windsor; and the Opposition, under the circumstances, desired to abstain from discussing the grant. The Ministry, actuated by the same feelings, met them half-way. The vote was withdrawn, and the subject of it was referred to a select committee.[2]

Windsor Castle.

With two exceptions the Ministry had succeeded in carrying all its proposals. The reductions which it had voluntarily made had conciliated moderate men on both sides of the House, and had enabled it to resist the motions for further economies. The savings which had been effected facilitated the financial arrangements of the year. The expenditure of 1829 had been placed at 48,333,593*l.*; the expenditure of 1830 was placed at

The Budget.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 958.

[2] Ibid., vol. xxiv. p. 352. The increased sums for the repair of the Castle, voted in previous years, had provoked a good deal of debate and hostile criticism.

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only 47,812,000*l.*[1] The revenue of 1829 had been placed at 51,347,000*l.*; the revenue of 1830 was placed at 50,480,000*l.*[2] Goulburn, therefore, had a clear surplus revenue of 2,670,000*l.* But he was able to increase this surplus by dealing on a large scale with the debt. In his last year of office Vansittart had reduced the interest of the Navy 5 per cents. to 4 per cent. per annum. Goulburn decided on effecting a further saving in the same way, and on reducing the interest of this Stock to 3½ per cent. a year. Every holder of the 4 per cent. Stock was to have the option of exchanging it for 100*l.* New 3½ per cent. Stock, or 70*l.* 5 per cent. Stock. As the scheme dealt with upwards of 150,000,000*l.*, it effected an annual saving of rather more than 750,000*l.*

[1]

	£
Debt	25,671,000
Annuities	2,629,000
Exchequer Bills	750,000
Civil List	2,180,000
Supply Services	16,582,000
Total	£47,812,000

—*Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 319.

[2]

Customs	17,200,000
Excise	19,300,000
Stamps	7,100,000
Assessed Taxes	4,900,000
Post Office	1,500,000
Small Branches and Miscellaneous	480,000
Total	£50,480,000

—*Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 318.

The financial arrangements of 1827, 1828, 1829 were comparatively unimportant. In 1827 the revenue amounted to 54,486,657*l.*; the expenditure, without the Sinking Fund, to 53,354,430*l.* (*Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 1652.) In 1828 the revenue was placed at 53,902,030*l.*, the expenditure at 50,104,522*l.* (Ibid., p. 1659.) In 1829 the revenue was placed at 51,347,000*l.*, the expenditure at 48,333,593*l.* (Ibid., vol. xxi. p. 1178.) The reductions in 1829 were due to the termination of Vansittart's scheme for commuting the life annuities for a fixed sum of 2,800,000*l.* a year. The trustees had disposed of a portion of their annuity to the Bank of England; in return for which the Bank had undertaken to pay the pensions up to 1828. The agreement expired in 1828; and the Finance Committee recommended that it should not be renewed. (*Return of Public Income and Expenditure*, pt. ii. p. 517.) In 1828 the Sinking Fund was reduced to 3,000,000*l.*; and in 1829, in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance Committee, it was finally reduced to the actual surplus. (Ibid., p. 720.)

a year; and provided, therefore, a substantial addition to Goulburn's surplus.

Goulburn proposed to apply considerable portions of this surplus to the relief of the poorer and industrial classes. The taxes which appeared to him most worthy of attention were those on leather, beer, and cider. The tax on leather produced an income of 400,000*l.* a year; but it was peculiarly oppressive to the trade, and Goulburn decided on abolishing it. The duty on beer, independently of the malt tax, produced a revenue of 3,000,000*l.*; and it was also selected for repeal. The duty on cider did not yield more than 25,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* a year, and it naturally stood or fell with the tax on beer. Goulburn, therefore, proposed to repeal taxation yielding in the aggregate nearly 3,500,000*l.* a year.

Some portions of this scheme were readily accepted. No one could defend the duty on leather. It was a commodity which it was necessary for the poor to use, and which it was therefore desirable to render as cheap as possible. The retention of the duty compelled the manufacturer to carry on his business under the superintendence of an Excise officer, and, therefore, subjected him to the annoying restrictions which are inseparable from a supervision of this character. Everyone was, therefore, in favour of reducing the tax on leather. No one objected to the repeal of the duty on cider; but a violent opposition was raised to any alteration in the duties on beer. Up to 1830 the sale of beer had been limited to those persons who had obtained a license from the magistrates of the district in which they resided. The magistrates were in the habit of conferring these licenses on the occupiers of particular houses; and the great brewers, in consequence, bought up these houses, or advanced money to their proprietors. In practice, then, a few brewers of capital and position had obtained a monopoly of the trade in beer. In repealing the beer duties the

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Ministry decided on authorising the Commissioners of Excise to license any persons to sell beer on the payment of 2*l.* 2*s.* a year. The proposal excited vehement opposition. Country gentlemen, who would have preferred the reduction of the malt tax to the remission of the beer duties; brewers, who desired to retain the trade in their own hands; licensed victuallers, trembling at the possible competition of beershops; Tories, who objected to the withdrawal of protection from anyone; united in attacking the measure. Four hundred and eighty-three petitions were presented against the bill; while only eight were addressed to the House of Commons in its favour. In both Houses of Parliament an endeavour was made to limit the scope of the bill, and to prevent the beer bought in the new beerhouses being drunk on the premises. The attempt was defeated in the House of Commons by 138 votes to 108, and in the House of Lords by a still larger majority. The bill became law; and a new blow was thus struck at the monopolies which previous generations had been in the habit of creating.[1]

The creation of beershops.

Goulburn's budget had effected a considerable reduction in the burdens upon the nation; but the Opposition were not satisfied with the relief which the taxpayers had received. Poulett Thomson was a Russia merchant, young in point of years and in Parliamentary experience. He was familiar with the views of the economical writers of his time, and was exceptionally vain of the knowledge which he had thus acquired. Thomson desired to repeal the taxes on timber, coal, hemp, glass, paper, and other articles; and to reduce the duties on soap, barilla, tea, tobacco, spirits, wine, and sugar. His proposal involved a large reduction of revenue; and Thomson abstained from explaining how the loss, which would thus be occasioned, could be supplied. Althorp, however, who was a warm friend of Thomson's, had the courage to declare

Poulett Thomson's motion for free trade.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxv. pp. 580, 1104.

that, if no other means of doing so were possible, the property tax should be reimposed. The suggestion did not reconcile the Whigs to Thomson's motion. It was regarded as rash and unsound. Althorp was told that, if he broached such doctrines, he would be the most unpopular man in England. Such being the opinion of the Whigs the result of the debate was certain. The measure of free trade, which Poulett Thomson was contemplating, could only be secured by the imposition of direct taxation; and the Whigs, as a body, still preferred the continuance of the existing system to the revival of the income tax. Thomson's motion was accordingly rejected by a large majority.[1]

The disorganisation of the Opposition.

The Opposition had little cause to congratulate itself on the result of these discussions. The debate on the address had nearly resulted in the defeat of the Government; yet, ever since the date of it, the Ministry had been able to command a majority in almost every division. Everyone was dissatisfied with the Government; but the Opposition had no cohesion. Split into numerous bodies, under various leaders, it was only able to wage a guerilla warfare, and was rarely able to combine its whole force on any particular occasion. Since the death of Ponsonby in 1816 the Whig party in the House of Commons had never really enjoyed the advantage of a leader. Tierney had nominally acted as Ponsonby's successor; but Tierney had never enjoyed the confidence of the entire Opposition. He abdicated the lead in 1821, and thenceforward the Opposition were utterly disorganised and without a head. Tierney died suddenly in January 1830. At the time of his death there were only two members of the House of Commons who had the slightest claim to lead the Whig party. Brougham had no rival in ability and eloquence; but Brougham's great qualifications had never gained for him the confidence of the Whigs. The mag-

[1] 167 votes to 78. *Hansard*, vol. xxiii. p. 918.

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nates of the party considered that the lead should be entrusted to one of themselves; and Brougham had diminished his own chances by the support which he had extended to Canning in 1827. Lord Grey had not quite forgiven him his conduct on that occasion; and Lord Grey's son, Howick, had ever since regarded him with distrust and suspicion. Brougham being unacceptable to the party, the more moderate members of it conceived the possibility of enrolling themselves under Lord Althorp's guidance. 'Honest Jack Althorp' had been steadily rising in the opinion of his friends. His excellent judgment; his enlightened opinions on political, religious, and economical subjects; his well-known honesty; and his high social position fitted him for the first place in an assembly of English gentlemen. During the whole of the session of 1830 some of his more immediate friends had been in the habit of meeting at his chambers in the Albany to discuss the propriety of various proceedings. The chance remark of a member of the Government that the Opposition were a loose bundle of sticks induced one or two Whigs to propose that Althorp should be formally invested with the lead. A large section of the party endorsing the suggestion, Althorp accepted the situation which was thus entrusted to him. He took an early opportunity of intimating in the House of Commons that he was no longer only expounding his own opinions, but that he had become the spokesman of a party. Peel started with surprise when the declaration was made, his experience necessarily suggesting to him the consequences of an organised Opposition.[1] The Ministry, he must have felt, had no longer to deal with a loose bundle of sticks: they had to face the attack of a united party.

Althorp selected for the lead.

During the remainder of the session, however, the improved organisation of the Whigs had no material effect on Parliamentary tactics. The same reason which had

[1] Althorp, p. 246. Roebuck, vol. i. p. 466.

checked the discussion of the vote for Windsor prevented any real attack being made on the Ministry. For some years George IV. had been suffering from weak health; he had been unequal to the discharge of many of the duties of his position; and he had withdrawn himself more and more from the public gaze, and had retired more and more completely into the narrow circle of his favourites and his attendants. His wretched health made everyone speculate on the possibility of his death; but the care of his medical advisers repaired his shattered constitution and prolonged his feeble life for the time. Early in 1830, however, his immediate suite were no longer able to conceal from themselves the critical condition of their master. In the middle of April a bulletin announcing his illness was issued to the public. His growing feebleness compelled him in May to give up signing the various documents which technically required his signature. The Legislature, on the advice of the Ministry, passed a temporary law allowing the sign manual to be affixed to a paper, in the king's presence, by a stamp.[1] The bill, which was passed in the end of May, relieved the king during the last month of his unhappy life from some of the labours of his situation. Real relief it was impossible to afford him. An ossification of the heart produced an embarrassment in breathing, and a violent cough increased his distress. His miserable life had not won for him a single friend to cheer his later moments. The ruling favourite stayed at the Castle, but she only remained for the sake of plundering the establishment.[2] The king's valets, imitating the example of their betters, endeavoured to secure for themselves the wardrobe of their dying master. No one seems to have taken any interest in the king. Becoming continually weaker and weaker, the rupture of a blood-vessel in the stomach at length released him from further suffering. He died

The illness of the king.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiv. pp. 1002, 1062. [2] Greville, vol. ii. p. 31.

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on the 26th of June,[1] and his attendants had leisure to amuse themselves with examining the innumerable ladies' gloves, lockets of hair, and other trophies which their singular master had preserved,[2] and to marvel at the one trait of constancy which threw a partial gleam on his unhappy character—that he had died with Mrs. Fitzherbert's locket round his neck.

His death.

His character.

The character of George IV. has already been described in these pages. It is unnecessary to supplement that description here. For one hundred and thirty years before his accession Britain had never known a worse sovereign. Yet she owes more to George IV.'s vices than to George III.'s virtues. George IV. had all the obstinacy which characterised his father. Like his father, he had considerable capacity for business. After his father's death he succeeded to his father's narrow views of government, and thought that it was both his interest and duty to maintain every abuse in Church and State in the exact shape in which he had found it on his accession to the throne. It is possible that, if George IV. had inherited his father's virtues, his influence would have prevented his ministers from proposing the great religious reforms which are the distinguishing feature of his reign. Wellington, like Pitt, might have recoiled from driving an estimable sovereign out of his mind, or from forcing him into exile. They persevered in their policy, in opposition to the king's wishes, because his threat to retire to Hanover boomed harmlessly, like an unshotted gun, on their ears. It was very improbable that the king would carry out his threat; it was still more unlikely that anyone would care if he did so. His next heir, it was true, was eccentric, but he was popular; he was more liberal in his views than his elder brother; and his acces-

[1] For the king's illness see Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. pp. 7, 28, 29, 31, 58, 102. For the Signet Bill, ibid., pp. 9, 45, 59, 66.

[2] Greville, vol. ii. p. 190.

sion to the throne was certain to be widely welcomed. The anxiety which a whole nation felt to prolong the virtuous rule of George III. induced Pitt to yield his own opinions to his master's. The utter indifference of everyone towards George IV. deprived the selfish king of the influence which he might otherwise have acquired in the counsels of his advisers. CHAP. X. 1830.

William IV., who succeeded to the throne, seemed to have been designed by nature as a contrast to his brother. The gossips who were familiar with the inner life of the Royal Family were, indeed, full of good stories which illustrated the eccentricity of the new king.[1] But his eccentricities were exactly suited to the temper of the time. Years had passed since George IV. had walked about London publicly. Within a month of his accession William IV. was walking up St. James's Street alone, mobbed, and even kissed by his subjects, and able only with difficulty to rescue himself from their embarrassing attentions and to escape to his palace. The Duke of Clarence's unceasing activity in office had necessitated his removal from the Admiralty. William IV. passed a long summer's day reviewing troops, holding drawing-rooms, or attending to other matters. Never before had London seen so unceremonious and so good-natured a king. He had a good-humoured remark for everyone. He would sit in his own carriage with his back to the horses, or stop his coach to drop a friend at his own door. Half-shocked, half-amused at these eccentricities, which seemed the more peculiar after the rigid etiquette of George IV., people wondered whether the mind of the king would continue sane, or whether mere oddity would degenerate into lunacy. William IV.

In the meanwhile the Legislature hastily completed

[1] Sir Henry Cooke, writing on the 16th of June, 1830, declared that 'the general bet is that it is even chance that Clarence is in a straight-waistcoat before the king dies.'—Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 93.

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the work which it was still necessary to perform. The law required that a dissolution should take place within six months of the demise of the crown; and the Ministry considered that it would be 'conducive to the general convenience and to the public interests' that the new Parliament should meet with as little delay as possible. In accordance with the precedent which had been established ten years before, the various measures which were already before the Legislature were hastily disposed of. The Ministry refused to touch any new subject of importance; they even declined to provide for the possible demise of the crown before the meeting of the new Parliament,[1] or to do more than make a temporary provision for the Civil List. On the 23rd of July the Parliament was prorogued; on the following day it was dissolved by proclamation.

Parliament dissolved.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxv. p. 1067.

CHAPTER XI.

THE news of the battle of Navarin reached England on the 10th of November, 1827. The members of the Cabinet were gradually collecting in London; they were able to meet and talk over the unexpected intelligence. It was easy to see that the destruction of the Turkish fleet would necessarily lead to the independence of the Morea. The Turks would obviously be unable to supply their troops by land; and they would also be prevented from obtaining further assistance from Egypt. Codrington's victory at Navarin, then, involved the ultimate independence of Greece. But this result might either be expedited or retarded by the conduct of the allies. The Treaty of London had pledged 'the high contracting powers to exert all the means which circumstances may suggest to their prudence' to force an armistice on the combatants. No one could pretend that Codrington had exhausted all the means at the disposal of the allies. It was, on the contrary, notorious that Russia was massing an army on the Pruth, and prepared at any moment to occupy the Turkish provinces on the Danube. The British Ministry was in the meanwhile torn by dissensions. They had not originally applied the same interpretation to the famous Treaty of London; they had not anticipated the consequences which were to result from it; they doubted the expediency of the course which Codrington had taken; and they were not agreed upon the policy which they should themselves pursue. Huskisson, Dudley, Palmerston, and the remnant of Canning's friends were disposed to regard the battle as a

The news of Navarin reaches London.

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fortunate event, to allow matters to take their course, and to suffer Russia to go to war with Turkey. The Tory section of the Cabinet, on the contrary, were startled at the interpretation which Codrington had given to their own instructions, and at the prostration of Turkey before its hereditary foe.[1]

Sir John Gore instructed to report upon the engagement.

The Cabinet were, then, deliberating on the policy which they should pursue. But while they deliberated the king and his brother, the Lord High Admiral, acted. The Duke of Clarence cared very little for the political questions involved in Codrington's conduct, but he took the interest, which every British sailor felt, in the last achievement of the British fleet. Three days after the news of Navarin reached this country the 'Gazette' announced that Codrington had received the Grand Cross of the Bath, and that some of his officers had been made Knights Commanders of the Bath for their services in the action.[2] The king and the Duke of Clarence had practically settled the question on which the Ministry had been anxiously deliberating. It was clearly impossible to recall the admiral whom the sovereign had just rewarded. But the Cabinet were not satisfied with the prudence of Codrington's conduct. They drew up a series of questions which they required him to answer; and they sent out Sir John Gore to inquire into the circumstances which had led to the action. Gore reported in Codrington's favour. He declared that the battle 'did not commence with the allies,' and that Codrington had taken 'a dispassionate, enlightened, and extensive view' of his instructions.[3] Those members of the Cabinet who had regretted the engagement had nothing to do but conceal their annoyance.

Goderich's Administration soon afterwards crumbled

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 206. Greville, vol. i. p. 114.

[2] *London Gazette*, 13th Nov. Codrington, vol. ii. p. 115.

[3] The questions will be found in Codrington, vol. ii. p. 126. Gore's report in ibid., p. 136.

into pieces. Wellington was desired to form a Ministry; and on his accession to power the policy of the battle became again an open question. Wellington had not approved the policy of the Treaty of London. He thought that Navarin had been fought 'under false pretences.'[1] Peel had never concealed his apprehensions of the possible consequences of the action;[2] and the Tories, as a party, had supported Turkey against Russia. It seemed possible, therefore, that the new Ministry might endeavour to reverse the policy of 1827, or, at any rate, to check the advance of Russia in the East. Huskisson, to whom Wellington at once offered high office, shared these apprehensions. He was reassured by the promise that Dudley was to be left at the Foreign Office. Dudley was the minister who had signed the Treaty of London; but this single incident in his career gave only an imperfect illustration of his views on Eastern politics. 'I have always reckoned it,' so he wrote a few years before, 'to be the disgrace of Christendom to suffer those hateful barbarians, the Turks, to remain encamped upon the finest and most renowned part of Europe for upwards of four centuries, during at least two of which it has been in our power to drive them out whenever we pleased. Let us, at least, have one civilised and Christian quarter of the globe, though it is the smallest. If three Christian sovereigns could divide Christian Poland, and that without interference on the part of England, surely her safety cannot be bound up in the existence of a barbarous Mahometan despotism. Her influence and authority would, no doubt, be well employed in modifying the new arrangement that would arise upon any downfall of the Ottoman power; *e.g.* in preventing it from turning too much to the profit of the Russians, and too little to that of the Greeks; but it would be a paltry, mistaken policy to pre-

The formation of Wellington's Ministry.

Dudley's views on the Eastern question.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 171.
[2] Colchester, vol. iii. p. 526.

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vent the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, where they have only appeared as usurpers and tyrants.'[1]

The notice of Navarin in the speech.

Dudley's presence in the Cabinet was, therefore, reassuring to Huskisson. Wellington, when he read Gore's report and Codrington's explanation, expressed himself satisfied with the latter's conduct.[2] The Cabinet decided on adhering to the policy of the Treaty of London, though the majority of them regretted that it had been necessary to carry it out by force. At the end of the month the compromise which was thus arranged was expressed in words. The king, in opening Parliament, was advised to refer to the circumstances under which the Treaty of London had been executed, and to the measures which had been taken to give effect to it. In their execution 'a collision, wholly unexpected by his Majesty, took place in the port of Navarin. His Majesty deeply laments that this conflict should have occurred with the naval force of an ancient ally; but he still entertains a confident hope that this untoward event will not be followed by further hostilities, and will not impede that amicable adjustment of existing difficulties between the Porte and the Greeks to which it is so manifestly their common interest to accede.'[3] The Ministry do not seem to have anticipated the burst of indignation which this language provoked. 'If,' said Lord Holland, 'it is meant by "untoward"' to cast any blame upon 'the gallant officer who commanded the fleet at Navarin, against the baseness and ignominy of such an insinuation I would protest in the most solemn way. If we are to understand that' the word 'refers to that which happened by accident, I must also protest against it. However much I may lament the effusion of blood which has taken place at Navarin, I look upon' the battle 'as a step, and a great step, towards the pacification

Remonstrances against the language of the speech.

[1] Ward's correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, p. 288.

[2] Palmerston, p. 219.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 3.

of Europe.' Almost at the same moment Brougham was expressing a similar opinion in the House of Commons, and declaring that his views would be 're-echoed from one end of the kingdom to the other.' 'The battle of Navarin,' said Lord Althorp, 'was a necessary consequence of the Treaty of London.' The battle of Navarin, said Lord John Russell, 'was a glorious victory, and as honest a victory as had ever been gained since the beginning of the world.'[1] The author of 'Hohenlinden' shared the indignation of the Whig leaders:—

> Yet Navarin's heroes! does Christendom breed
> The base hearts that will question the fame of your deed?
> Are they men?—let ineffable scorn be their meed,
> And oblivion shadow their graves!—
> Are they women?—to Turkish serails let them speed,
> And be mothers of Mussulman slaves.

Effects of the battle at the Porte.

The burst of indignation with which the allusion to Navarin had been received strengthened the hands of the Liberal section of the Cabinet. But the speech had been no sooner delivered than the Ministry had occasion to doubt the propriety of its language. The news of the battle reached Constantinople on the 1st of November. The ministers of the Porte did not lose their composure under the disaster which had befallen their arms. They informed the ambassadors of the allied powers that they expected the allies to desist from all interference in the affairs of Greece, and to indemnify the Porte for the destruction of its fleet. The ambassadors naturally replied that the Treaty of London was still in force, and that the battle of Navarin was commenced by the Turks themselves. The allies could not, therefore, consistently with the treaty, abandon the Greeks; and they could not recognise the Turkish claim to compensation for its

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xviii. pp. 23, 52, 60, 67.

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fleet.[1] Some unimportant communications subsequently took place between the Porte and the ambassadors. Both sides, however, declined to give way, and, on the 8th of December, the ambassadors left Constantinople. It was obvious that their withdrawal from the Porte made war likely: the action of the Turks made it inevitable. On the 30th of November the Porte had the inconceivable folly to issue a Hatti Scheriff in which it declared that the concessions which had been already made by it had been only due to its desire to gain time, and that the stipulations of Ackermann were unjust and had only 'hitherto' been complied with. The Hatti Scheriff denounced the conduct of the allies as a declaration of war, and called on all the faithful, 'rich or poor, great or little,' to take up arms, as the only 'means of working out salvation in this world and the next.'[2] The Hatti Scheriff was communicated privately to the Turkish officials, but copies of it soon found their way into the Continental papers.[3] The Porte, moreover, followed up its threats with acts which rendered the meaning of its language no longer doubtful. In defiance of the Treaty of Ackermann, Russian ships were stopped at Constantinople, Russian subjects were expelled from Turkey, and the Porte persuaded Persia to continue a war with the Russians in which she was involved. Russia, thus receiving a distinct intimation that she had been deceived at Ackermann, resolved

The Porte issues a Hatti Scheriff.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 26.

[2] The Hatti Scheriff will be found, in French, in *State Papers*, vol. xiv. p. 1052; in English, *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Chron., p. 397.

[3] I have purposely endeavoured in the text to give the mildest interpretation of the words of the Hatti Scheriff. They are: 'L'année passée même, quoique les propositions absurdes, faites par la Russie à Akerman sur les indemnités, ne fussent pas de nature à être acceptées, la Sublime Porte y adhéra, malgré elle, pour se conformer à l'urgence du moment et pour sauver la nation mussulmane, en attendant une meilleure occasion. *Jusqu'à présent* la majeure partie des articles a été mise à exécution.' Peel said of this paragraph: 'She (Turkey) had signed the Treaty of Ackermann with the intention of violating it, and that she never would fulfil any of its conditions. (*Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 554.) The 'absurdes' was left out of the passage when it was translated for the British public! *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Chron., p. 398.

upon war. The Hatti Scheriff of December had assured her, in the first instance, that the treaty was regarded as an absurdity. The stoppage of her commerce at Constantinople, and the consequent paralysis of her trade, made peace impossible. She had no alternative but to accept the issue, and 'to reply to war by war.'[1] Nesselrode, indeed, in announcing the intention of the Russian Government, declared that the emperor had no desire either for conquest or for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. He was sincerely anxious to adhere to the Treaty of London; and, in his opinion, the allies might continue to carry out the treaty. If, however, Russia were abandoned by her allies, she would none the less proceed to execute the treaty alone: 'Mais elle ne pourra consulter, dans le mode d'exécution de cet acte, que ses intérêts et ses convenances.'[2]

Russia declares war.

The situation was undoubtedly embarrassing. The solitary convenience which Wellington and the Tories had hoped to derive from the treaty of July had been lost through 'the infatuation'[3] of the Turkish Government. The treaty had tied Russia's hands and compelled her to march in concert with the allies; the folly of the Porte had given her not only an excuse but a justification for independent action. Aberdeen, indeed, who was already taking a considerable part in the Cabinet discussions on foreign policy, thought that the abandonment of neutrality by Russia afforded an excuse for tearing up the Treaty of London. But his advice was clearly impracticable. The country, moved by the story of Greek suffering, and animated by the news of the glorious battle of Navarin, was anxious for intervention. The Russian Government was urging its allies to united action. The French Go-

[1] See Nesselrode's despatch to Lieven (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 284). *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 50.

[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 285. *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 57. The concluding words were especially displeasing to Wellington.

[3] Peel's speech (*Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 554).

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vernment was insisting on the immediate adoption of energetic measures against the Porte.[1] A refusal on the part of the British Ministry to join with its allies in united action could only lead to the isolation of Britain. France and Russia would still pursue the work of pacifying Greece; and they would do so without either asking or attending to the advice of the British Government.

The views of the Allies.

Russia and France had already explained the measures which they thought necessary in the crisis. Russia proposed to move an army through the Principalities into Turkey, and simultaneously to attack Constantinople with the allied fleet. Turkey was, in short, to be assailed in the most effective manner, and peace was to be secured on the ruins of the Turkish Empire.[2] France proposed a course which was slightly more moderate. Russia, in her judgment, should occupy the Principalities; the allied fleet should blockade Constantinople; and Turkey, after these measures had been adopted, should again be asked to accept the Treaty of London. The Russian proposal obviously implied war; the French alternative would probably lead to war; and the British Cabinet was not prepared to accede to any plan involving hostilities. Wellington was willing to prevent the despatch of reinforcements by sea to the Turkish armies in Greece; but he was not ready to sanction any more active measures. The allies, then, were by no means agreed upon the proper means for securing the pacification of Greece. The British Government had not even made up its mind what independence Greece should enjoy, or what limits she should be given. Wellington desired to confine Greece to the Morea and a few islands; to compel the Greeks to pay a tribute of 200,000*l.* a year and an indemnity of 1,500,000*l.*, and to follow the Turks in peace

[1] The French despatch will be found in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 270.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 30.

and war. But the proposal was received with indignation in his own Cabinet. Even Aberdeen denounced it. He knew, he said, that the whole tribute of the Morea could be carried on the backs of twelve mules. Peel declared that he preferred independence to suzerainty; and Palmerston objected to the narrow limits of the new territory.[1] The limits which the duke had proposed for modern Greece seemed, indeed, almost purposely designed to provoke criticism. A territory which did not include Athens, which did not include Thebes, which did not include Missolonghi, which did not include Thermopylæ, which did not include Marathon—a territory whose limits did not embrace Helicon, or Parnassus, or Pindus, or Pelion, or Ossa might possibly acquire a partial independence, but it could not be Greece. The scenes which had made the Greek race famous, the hills whose names were associated with Greek literature, the fields which had been hallowed by Greek blood, were excluded from it. Greece without Athens would be France without Paris. Greece without Marathon would be Scotland without Bannockburn.

An Egyptian fleet enters and leaves Navarin.

In the meanwhile the necessity for enforcing the treaty had become more marked. The allied fleets, after the battle of Navarin, had retired to Malta and other places for the necessary repairs. During their absence a considerable number of Turkish and Egyptian vessels succeeded in reaching Navarin, in embarking some invalid and wounded soldiers of Ibrahim's army and some 5,500 Greeks, and in proceeding safely to Alexandria. The wretched Greeks, immediately after their arrival in Egypt, were sold into slavery. The first report of this unfortunate circumstance reached London in a despatch from Codrington. The Government, within forty-eight hours of the receipt of it, made the most active inquiries into

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 230.

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the facts.[1] The inquiries unfortunately established the truth of the story. The British Consul at Alexandria reported that the Greeks, who were chiefly women and children, had 'arrived in the most wretched state of suffering from hunger and grief.' The members of the Cabinet received the news with different feelings. Aberdeen thought that Britain had no right to interfere in the matter; Bathurst regarded the conduct of the Turks as legitimate; Ellenborough's feelings on the subject were even stronger than Bathurst's. Palmerston, on the contrary, insisted that the removal of the Greeks was a stain on the national character, and that every effort should be made to recover the miserable captives.[2] The Cabinet received Palmerston's advice coldly. They contented themselves with finding fault with Codrington. Huskisson denounced his 'lamentable incompetence and self-sufficiency.'[3] Palmerston derided his boasted annihilation of the Turkish fleet. His supersession was determined on; but it was decided, in the first instance, to call upon him to explain how the Ottoman fleet could have sailed from Navarin to Alexandria without his knowledge.[4] The information seemed the more requisite since he himself had reported, with the allied admirals, that an 'armistice de mer existe de fait du côté des Turcs; leur flotte n'existe plus.'[5]

Codrington recalled.

Codrington's explanation[6] was not regarded as satisfactory by the Government. It was determined to recall him; and the Lord High Admiral was instructed to select

[1] Lady Bourchier, in her anxiety to defend her father, inserts a memorandum of her brother's which accuses Peel of falsehood, making him say, 'in forty-eight hours after the news arrived communications were made to the British Admiral.' Peel really said 'within forty-eight hours after the arrival of the news the most active inquiry had been entered upon by Government.' Cf. Codrington, vol. ii. p. 175; and *Hansard*, vol. xviii. p. 1441. The previous speech of Huskisson, referred to in the same memorandum, is not reported in *Hansard*.

[2] Palmerston, vol. i. p. 291.

[3] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 345, 423.

[4] Palmerston, vol. i. p. 231.

[5] Codrington, vol. ii. p. 231.

[6] Ibid., p. 232.

a competent successor. An unexpected circumstance, however, delayed the formal notification of the Cabinet's decision. The Cabinet which decided on Codrington's recall was the last which was attended by all the members of Wellington's Administration. Huskisson's vote on the East Retford question, and his hasty letter to the Prime Minister, led to his own resignation, and to the retirement of Palmerston, Dudley, and Grant. The despatch which had been prepared recalling Codrington lay unsigned at the Foreign Office. It had been approved by the Cabinet on the 19th of May; but it did not leave London till the 4th of June. It was not received by Codrington till the end of that month; and Pulteney Malcolm, who was appointed to succeed him, did not relieve him of his command till the following August. The delay which thus took place was fortunate for Codrington. It enabled him to repair the consequences of the error which he had committed in allowing the Egyptian fleet to escape from Navarin.

The evacuation of the Morea.

News had arrived in London, at the beginning of April, that the Turks, alarmed at the imminence of war with Russia, had ordered their commanders in Greece to suspend hostilities for three months. The Cabinet had at once forwarded fresh instructions to Codrington. The blockade of the Morea was to be continued more strictly than ever; and, if the stringency of the blockade should dispose Ibrahim to withdraw his forces from Greece, every facility for doing so should be afforded him. But at the same time an intimation was to be made that the British Government hoped that the pacha would release any Greek women or children who had been sent as slaves from the Morea to Egypt.[1] Codrington carried out these instructions to the best of his ability. With the aid of the French and Russian squadrons he maintained an effec-

[1] Codrington, vol. ii. p. 254. Cf. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. pp. 337, 344.

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tive blockade of the coasts of Greece, and prevented any large supplies reaching Ibrahim. Ibrahim found his food gradually failing, and wrote to Egypt for stores. Mehemet Ali referred him, in reply, to the allied admirals. The allied admirals told him that the blockade would be continued with the utmost rigour.[1] Ibrahim expressed his readiness to embark if a Turkish fleet were sent to enable him to do so. Encouraged by the evident anxiety of Ibrahim to escape from his situation, Codrington addressed himself personally to Mehemet Ali at Alexandria. The pacha, Codrington found, was as anxious as Ibrahim for an honourable excuse for withdrawing from the war. The basis of an agreement for this purpose was at once arranged. The pacha undertook to give orders for the evacuation of the Morea, and to send transports to Navarin for the accommodation of the troops. He engaged to give up at once the Greek slaves in his own possession, and to use his influence to obtain the release of the other captives who were not under his own control.[2]

The French expedition to the Morea.

The conclusion of this arrangement with Mehemet Ali did not secure the complete evacuation of the Morea by the Ottoman troops. In addition to his own men, Ibrahim had detachments of Turks and Albanians under his orders; and Mehemet Ali, in withdrawing his army, stipulated that five fortresses, Patras, Castel Tornese, Navarin, Modon, and Coron, should continue in Turkish occupation. The Turkish garrisons, however, which were thus left in possession of a few strong points in the Morea were not long permitted to enjoy their position. Early in the spring the French Government had proposed that,

[1] Codrington, vol. ii. p. 360. The Russian and French admirals only were present at the interview. Codrington was represented by Captain Campbell.

[2] The best account of these negotiations is to be found in Codrington, vol. ii. pp. 383–406. The preliminaries were concluded by Barker, the English Consul, and Drovetti, the French Consul, at Alexandria. Consul Barker seems to have done his work well, and to deserve more credit for it than he has received. Cf. *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 380; and *Ann. Reg.*, Hist., 1828, p. 242.

in conjunction with their allies, they should send a strong force to the Morea and sweep the Turks from the territory. The proposal had been strongly supported by Palmerston, but it had been stoutly resisted by Wellington, and abandoned on his remonstrance.[1] As the year advanced, however, the French people became more clamorous in their desire to afford effective assistance to the Greeks. The French Government again and again renewed their proposal, and the duke, changing his front, found it necessary to assent to it. The British Government was not, indeed, in a position to send troops to the Morea; but it was ready to contribute in every way to the success of the French expedition, either by increasing its naval force in the Mediterranean or by supplying transports for the conveyance of the French troops. A formal Protocol, embodying these views, was signed at the Foreign Office in London on the 19th of July, 1828.[2] Eighteen thousand French soldiers, under the command of General Maison, were soon afterwards embarked for the Morea. The slender Turkish garrisons, attacked by this force, were compelled to surrender; and before the close of the year the Morea was completely freed from the last remnant of the Ottoman soldiery.[3]

The conference at Poros.

The Morea had been freed from the rule of its conquerors. But its liberators had many difficult questions to discuss and to settle. They held different views upon the proper boundaries for the new state; they held various opinions upon the degree of independence which it should receive. During the early part of 1828 these questions had been anxiously considered at conferences held in London by the plenipotentiaries of the allies. But the Russian despatch of February, which had announced Nicholas's intention to carry out the treaty 'selon ses intérêts et ses convenances,' had led to the suspension of

[1] Palmerston, vol. i. p. 288. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 543. *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 98.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 243.

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these conferences.[1] Russia, however, agreed to lay aside her belligerent rights in the Mediterranean, and the conferences were immediately resumed.[2] Soon after their resumption the plenipotentiaries decided to send the three ambassadors who had represented them at Constantinople to some convenient island in the Archipelago, to ascertain the best natural frontier for the new state, the amount of tribute which it should pay to the Porte, and the degree of independence which it should enjoy.[3] In accordance with these instructions the ambassadors proceeded to Poros. They agreed on recommending their Governments to adopt the largest boundaries which had ever been suggested; they cut down the Greek tribute to 1,500,000 piastres; and they recommended that the new state should be placed under an hereditary Christian prince. The recommendations were in every way opposed to the opinions of the British Cabinet. But they had received the support of Stratford Canning, who represented the Cabinet at Poros; and the British Government could not, therefore, reject them. A conference was held in London, on the 22nd of March, 1829, between the plenipotentiaries of the three allies, at which it was decided to adopt the conclusions of Poros as a basis for future negotiations; and to instruct the representatives of France and England, who were to return to Constantinople, to lay them before the Porte.[4] The British Government reluctantly acceded to this arrangement. It stipulated that the conclusions of Poros should be used only as the basis of discussion, and that they should not be tendered to the Porte as an ultimatum.[5] But, with this reservation, the British plenipotentiary agreed to the Protocol which was drawn up at the conference.

Stratford Canning had filled the post of Ambassador

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 80.
[2] Ibid., pp. 74, 85.
[3] Ibid., pp. 87–90. The three ambassadors were Stratford Canning, Guilleminot, and Ribeaupierre.
[4] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 132.
[5] Ibid., p. 161.

at the Porte from the autumn of 1825; he had displayed marked ability in the difficult negotiations with which he had from time to time been entrusted. But his opinions on the Greek question materially differed from the conclusions of the British Government. He felt that his position at Constantinople would be false if he were to be the representative of a Government desirous of confining the new territory to the Morea and the adjacent islands, and he accordingly conditionally tendered his resignation of his post. Aberdeen accepted his resignation, and appointed as his successor his own brother, Robert Gordon.[1] Gordon and Guilleminot, the French Ambassador, reached Constantinople on the 18th of June. With considerable difficulty they induced the Porte to accept the Treaty of London. But the Porte attached five conditions to its acceptance of the treaty. The new state was only to include the Morea and the adjacent islands; the tribute payable by it was to be apportioned to the revenue which it had formerly rendered to the Porte; materials of war found in the Turkish fortresses were to be restored to the Porte; the naval and military force of Greece was to be merely sufficient to preserve internal order; and no Greek was to leave the Ottoman dominions and settle in the new territory.[2] The Porte assented to the treaty on these conditions on the 15th of August. The plenipotentiaries of the allies met in London on the 19th of September to receive the Porte's answer. The French and Russian plenipotentiaries thought that the five conditions which the Porte had attached to its acceptance of the treaty vitiated its proceedings. The treaty of July must, in their judgment, be construed by the light of the Protocol of March; and the acceptance both of treaty and Protocol by the Porte must be complete and not conditional. It was in vain that the British plenipotentiary, who secretly desired to get rid of the Pro-

Stratford Canning superseded.

The Porte accepts the Treaty of London conditionally.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vi. pp. 11, 12, 15.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. pp. 174, 186.

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tocol of March, contended that the accession of the Porte to the treaty was complete. The French and Russian plenipotentiaries stood firm; and the British plenipotentiary, protesting stoutly to the end, had to give way.[1]

The progress of the Russo-Turkish war.

Events were, in fact, succeeding one another so rapidly that the British plenipotentiary had no alternative but to surrender his opinion. The questions which the plenipotentiaries were discussing were, in reality, being settled by the crash of arms in Eastern Europe. In 1828, indeed, the war reflected little credit on the Russian army. In Asia Minor, Paskievitsch captured Anapa, and, by a bold assault, obtained possession of Kars; while, in Europe, the Russians crossed the Danube at Brailow, and, by the treachery of a Turkish officer, succeeded in reducing Varna. But these achievements were accomplished after considerable losses, and were not so great as Europe had anticipated. Turkey had unexpectedly displayed a capacity for defence with which friends and foes had equally refused to credit her; and competent military critics speculated on the possibility of her successfully guarding the road to her capital. The Russians, however, annoyed at the ill-success of their arms, made elaborate preparations for pushing the campaign to a successful issue in 1829. In the middle of May, Diebitsch, the Russian general, invested Silistria. On the 10th of June he defeated the only Turkish army which was capable of relieving the fortress; and, after a six weeks' siege, Silistria surrendered. Masking the great position of Shumla, Diebitsch decided on crossing the Balkans, and on carrying the war into the heart of Roumelia. The movement was commenced on the 11th of July; it was concluded in nine days. Enfeebled by dysentery and disease, and wearied with a long and laborious march over a chain of mountains, which had only once before been crossed from north to south by a military force in the

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. pp. 189–191.

face of an opposing army, the Russian soldiers broke into a cry of delight as, emerging from the defiles, they saw their transports, laden with supplies, on the broad waters of the Bay of Bourgas beneath them. Diebitsch had only 'besieged one fortress and fought one battle, but this' had 'brought him into the very heart of the hostile territory.' He had 'arrived there followed by the shadow of an army, but with the reputation of irresistible success.'[1]

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The Treaty of Adrianople.

The successes which had attended their arms naturally induced the Russians to raise their demands. The British Government had only reluctantly accepted the Protocol of March as a basis for discussion. The Russians, after Diebitsch's first victory, converted it into an ultimatum.[2] Diebitsch had made it impracticable to confine the Greeks to the narrow limits of the Morea; and Aberdeen, unwilling to create a new power in the East, suggested the formation of two weak states instead of one strong one.[3] The unworthy proposition neither merited nor received serious consideration. The continuous advance of Diebitsch made all such suggestions useless. The question for consideration in August was not whether the boundaries of Greece should be more or less enlarged, but whether the Ottoman Empire could be preserved from annihilation. The Porte, awakening to its danger, hurriedly accepted the Treaty of London. Austria, aroused to the possibility of a Russian occupation of Constantinople, and utterly unprepared for war,[4] urged the immediate pacification of Greece. Gordon, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, and Müffling, the Prussian representative, begged the Turks to sue for peace.[5] Diebitsch, whose army was melting away from disease, paused in his march, and on the 14th of September peace was signed at Adrianople between Russia and the Porte.[6]

[1] Möltke, p. 476, quoted in Creasy's *Ottoman Turks*, p. 515. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vi. p. 194.
[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vi. p. 13.
[3] Ibid., p. 29.
[4] Ibid., vol. v. p. 408.
[5] Ibid., vol. vi. p. 188.
[6] Ibid., pp. 205, 212.

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The terms of the treaty.

The Peace of Adrianople continued the Pruth as the boundary of the Russian Empire in Europe. It left Russia, therefore, with a partial command of the mouths of the Danube. It extended the Russian frontier in Asia towards the south, including in it the fortress of Akhalzik and the port of Poti. Moldavia and Wallachia were placed under the Porte, but their prosperity was guaranteed by Russia; and the Porte was compelled to accept the treaty of July and the interpretation which the Protocol of March had placed on the treaty. Russian commerce was freed from every restriction placed on it by the Porte. The Porte was required to pay an indemnity of 5,750,000*l.*, and its territory was to be only gradually evacuated as the indemnity was paid. The British Ministry received the news of this treaty with much concern. Wellington had, from the first, distrusted the designs of Russia; he had never believed in the moderate professions which she had made before the war broke out.[1] He did not believe in the desire which Nicholas professed for the restoration of peace.[2] He was jealous of Russian aggrandisement, and his jealousy was increased by the foolish conduct of the Russian Ambassador in London. Monsieur de Lieven allowed his wife to mix in English politics, and to engage in a plot with the Duke of Cumberland for Wellington's dismissal. Madame de Lieven's conduct produced a coolness between the British and Russian Ministries which was unfortunate for both countries.[3] But the jealousy which was thus promoted did not disturb the duke's calmer judgment of events. He thought the surrender of Poti to Russia unfortunate, but he was too wise to go to war to prevent the cession of a port which ninety-nine Englishmen out of every hundred had never heard of.[4] He thought that the dismemberment of Turkey would have been preferable

[1] Wellington, vol. vi. p. 212.
[2] Ibid., p. 99.
[3] Ibid., vol. vi. pp. 103, 145.
[4] Ibid., p. 57.

to the conditions of Adrianople;[1] but he saw that it was hopeless to fight against the treaty. All that it was possible to do was to arrange the boundary for Greece, which should give the new state the least possible independence.

The failure of Wellington's foreign policy.

Aberdeen, who was, if possible, more Turkish than the duke, had already suggested that modern Greece should be weakened by being divided into two nations. He subsequently proposed to give the Greeks Attica, and to leave the Turks the adjacent islands of Eubœa and Crete. If Turkish power be 'good for anything, the possession of Candia and Eubœa ought effectually to control Greece.'[2] Aberdeen's second proposition was as impracticable as his first. Russia had taken the Greek question into her own hands. All that the British and French Governments could do was to induce her to restore its management to the allies. But this was the only material concession which Aberdeen was able to obtain. The bounds of the new state were carried to Thermopylæ on the one side, and to the mouth of the Aspropotamos on the other. Eubœa and Skyro were ceded to it; Greece was declared to be independent of the Porte, and was placed under the rule of an hereditary sovereign.[3] In every respect, therefore, the views of Wellington's Government had been ignored. Canning had raised the influence of his country by cordially co-operating with Russia and France on the Eastern question; in consequence the lead in the negotiations had passed into his hands. Wellington had reduced British influence by constantly thwarting his allies, and in consequence the Eastern question had passed out of his control. He had done everything in his power

[1] Wellington, vol. vi. p. 218

[2] Ibid., p. 176.

[3] Protocol, 3rd February, 1830. *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 191. See also Wellington, vol. vi. p. 219, for the previous negotiations. The subsequent negotiations, relative to the offer of the sovereignty to Leopold, and its acceptance by Otho, are omitted from this work, since they have no immediate bearing on British history. An account of them will be found in *State Papers*, vol. xviii. p. 597.

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to prevail upon Canning not to agree to the treaty of July;[1] the treaty of July had been signed. He had resisted the despatch of French troops to the Morea; and he had been compelled to be an assenting party to the French expedition. He had agreed to the Protocol of March on condition that it should only be made a basis for discussion; the Protocol had been converted into an ultimatum. He had desired to confine the Greek territory to the Morea and the adjacent islands; the extended limits, preferred by France and Russia, had been adopted. He had proposed that the Greeks should pay a heavy tribute, and they had been freed from any tribute whatever. Every position which he had successively assumed had been abandoned in turn. Every suggestion which he had made had been rejected by his allies. The Greek affair, he wrote, 'was the most unfortunate in which Europe was ever engaged.'[2] In one sense his conclusion was true: his management of it had brought contempt on the counsels of his country.

Portugal.

The failure of Wellington's foreign policy naturally discredited his Government. The Tories were annoyed at the declining influence of their country. The Liberals were furious at the obstacles which had been raised to the cause of Greek independence; and their anger was increased by the events which had, at the same period, occurred in another portion of Europe. Portugal had been the scene of Canning's most popular action. The great speech in which he had announced the decision of his Government to shelter the constitutional Regent from foreign attack was still fresh in the memory of the Liberal party. Canning had contemplated the possibility of a war of opinions, and had summoned all that was liberal in Europe to serve under the banners of Britain. His speech, and the action which followed it, had been

[1] See his letters to Prince of Orange (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 335).

[2] Ibid., vol. vii. p. 78.

successful. The armed bands which had crossed the Spanish frontier into Portugal were beaten by the Portuguese troops, and the presence of a British force in Lisbon gave confidence to the loyal. The success which Canning's policy had obtained supplied the only justification that his admirers required for it. But, as the year wore on, the Absolutists recovered their hopes and recommenced their intrigues for the subversion of the Constitution. Dom Miguel gave them some encouragement. In abdicating the throne of Portugal in his daughter's favour Dom Pedro had declared that his abdication should be completed by the acceptance of the Constitution and the conclusion of Donna Maria's marriage with Dom Miguel. The second of these stipulations had not been carried out; Donna Maria's tender age made its performance impossible; and Dom Pedro consequently concluded that his abdication was not complete. It was still open to him, therefore, as king, to make new arrangements for the Regency. Rumours reached Brazil of continued disturbances in Portugal. Reports arrived at the same time of the dangerous illness of the Infanta Isabella, the Regent. The Regent's natural successor in the Regency would be Dom Miguel. Dom Miguel's appointment afforded apparently the best chance of terminating the existing disturbances; and Dom Pedro accordingly decided on appointing his brother Regent.

Dom Miguel accepts the Regency.

The decree in which the appointment was made was signed at Rio de Janiero on the 3rd of July, 1827.[1] It reached Dom Miguel in Vienna, where he was residing. Those who were best acquainted with Dom Miguel's views had some anxiety to see how he would receive the decree. It was no secret that he claimed the Regency of Portugal as of right under the terms of Dom Pedro's Constitution;[2]

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xiv. p. 1130.

[2] Dom Pedro had made his sister Regent, until Miguel, having fulfilled the conditions of the Charter, and having completed his twenty-fifth year, should succeed to the administration of the kingdom. The Constitutionalists considered that these conditions

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and it was thought doubtful whether he would be willing to renounce his own rights by accepting it from his brother's hands. Conferences were held at Vienna between Dom Miguel's representative, the Austrian minister, and the British Ambassador. The Austrian Ministry seriously contemplated placing some restrictions on Dom Miguel's movements. Its suspicions were, however, allayed by the promises which the prince readily made. He undertook to go to Portugal—not through Spain, as he had originally contemplated—but through England, where there was little danger of his meeting his Absolutist supporters. He assured his sister, the Regent, whom he was superseding, of his intention to maintain the Constitution; and he disarmed even experienced diplomatists by the readiness with which he professed his desire to bury in oblivion the faults and errors of his past career, and to regulate his future conduct by the laws which he had sworn to observe.[1]

Absolutist revolution in Portugal.

Dom Miguel, making every promise that was demanded of him, was permitted to proceed from Vienna to London. He arrived in England at the end of 1827; he remained there till the middle of February 1828, enjoying the pleasures of English society, and allaying, by the warmth of his manner, any lurking suspicions of his sincerity. In the middle of February he sailed for Portugal; on the 22nd he arrived in the Tagus; on the 26th he took the oath prescribed by the Constitution. He had hardly sworn to preserve the Constitution before his adherents 'assailed him with recommendations to break it.' 'Declare yourself king; reign without the Chambers,' was the persistent advice of the Absolutists. 'Long live Dom Miguel, *il re assoluto!*' was the shout with which he was everywhere received in the capital.[2] Counsel and

pointed to the conclusion of the marriage. Dom Miguel thought that they were fulfilled on his attaining the prescribed age.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xv. pp. 978-996.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. xvi. p. 398. *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 184.

applause fell upon open ears. On the 11th of March the commanding officers of seven regiments, composing the garrison of Lisbon, were removed; on the 14th the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved. In the course of April the municipalities of some Portuguese towns memorialised Dom Miguel to declare himself legitimate king; and the Portuguese press published articles to prove his claims to the throne. On the 25th of April a tumultuous assemblage in Lisbon proclaimed him king. The nobles, backing up the municipalities and the population, begged Dom Miguel to convoke the three estates of the kingdom, to ask them to pronounce on his claims, and to abolish the Constitutional Charter. Forgetting both promise and oath, Dom Miguel, on the 3rd of May, issued a decree accordingly. On the 23rd of June the Cortes met, and on the 1st of July Dom Miguel formally accepted the crown which was immediately tendered to him.[1]

The British troops recalled from Lisbon.

Sir Frederick Lamb, who was British minister at Lisbon, saw from the first an evident determination on Dom Miguel's part to usurp the throne. Upon his own responsibility he took a decided step for the purpose of thwarting the usurper's views. The force which had been sent from Britain to Portugal in 1827 was still in Lisbon; but it was under orders to return home. Lamb detained it; and the Constitutionalists took heart at the detention of an army which had notoriously been sent, in the first instance, to aid them. The British Ministry approved the provisional act of their representative; but it nevertheless decided on recalling the troops.[2] They thought that it was impossible for them to interfere in the internal affairs of another country; and that the utmost they could do was to withdraw their minister from Lisbon in the event of Dom Miguel actually usurping the crown. The withdrawal of the British troops

[1] See Sir F. Lamb's despatches (*State Papers*, vol. xvi. pp. 398–417).

[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 321. Palmerston, vol. i. p. 225.

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removed the only impediment which had hitherto interfered with Dom Miguel's proceedings. But the assent of the Portuguese to his usurpation was less unanimous than he had probably expected. The inhabitants of Oporto declared their determination to support Dom Pedro. The garrison of the port adopted the same cause. Strengthened by the adherence of other regiments stationed in the neighbourhood, they marched upon Lisbon; and they sent to England, where the ablest Constitutionalists were refugees, for a capable leader.

The Constitutionalists on the Mondego.

These events happened in the latter half of May. Dom Miguel was seriously alarmed when the news of them reached him. Paralysed by the want of money, he was unable to take any really efficacious measures for defeating the adherents of Dom Pedro. Had the Constitutionalists had the courage to advance it is possible that they might have seized the capital and restored the Constitution. They stood idly, however, on the banks of the Mondego waiting for the leaders whom they expected from England. Unfavourable weather delayed the passage of Saldanha and the other Portuguese who hastened to place themselves at the head of the Oporto army. Dom Miguel, gaining a little courage, declared Oporto to be in a state of blockade; and the British Government, though they did not recognise Dom Miguel, acknowledged the blockade. A force, gradually collected in Lisbon, was despatched against the Constitutionalists. The Constitutionalists, worsted in an engagement on the Mondego, fell back upon Oporto. Unable even to defend Oporto, they retreated across the Spanish frontier in the beginning of July. The Spanish Government refrained from delivering them up to Dom Miguel; and the unfortunate men proceeded to Corunna, where they embarked for England.[1]

The revolt against his usurpation subdued, Dom Mi-

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist., p. 198.

guel completed the task which he had set himself and mounted the throne. All the great Continental powers withdrew their ministers from Lisbon; and Miguel, following up his treachery with cruelty, filled the prisons of the kingdom with his opponents, hurried hundreds of them to the scaffold, and drove thousands into exile.[1] The remains of the Oporto army, arriving at Plymouth, were allowed to remain in the place in which they had landed. Miguel, though he had broken all his promises, and had no accredited envoy in London, had the assurance to remonstrate against their presence in England. Palmella, who managed the affairs of the young Queen of Portugal, was advised by Brougham and Denman that a body of foreign troops could not legally be encamped on British soil; and in consequence desired to remove them to some region where their presence would be of service to Donna Maria's cause.

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The Portuguese at Plymouth.

The small group of islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean which are known as the Azores belonged to Portugal. They had refused to submit to the rule of Dom Miguel, and had remained faithful to Donna Maria. Miguel, having established himself in Lisbon, decided on reducing the Azores. The Government of the Azores, alarmed at the preparations which were being made for the purpose, applied to Palmella in London for the services of the Constitutional troops which had been landed at Plymouth. On the 15th of October, he announced to Wellington his intention to remove the troops to Terceira, the principal island in the Azores, and begged that the British Government would afford them the protection of some ships of war during their passage. Wellington replied that the British Government did not know of any Portuguese troops in England. The refugees who had landed at Plymouth were only regarded in their private capacity as individuals; and the British

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1828, Hist', p. 202.

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Government could not permit individuals, whoever they might be, to make war from England either on the Azores or on Portugal. In the following month Wellington followed up this declaration by insisting on the troops being distributed amongst the towns and villages of the three neighbouring counties. Palmella replied that he should prefer the removal of the troops to Brazil; and Wellington offered him a convoy to ensure their safety from attack during their passage. Palmella refused the convoy, on the ground that an armed escort would have the appearance of an expulsion by force; and suggested that the British Government should verbally guarantee the safety of the troops during their passage to South America. Wellington thought a verbal guarantee both useless and impracticable, and again urged the immediate departure of the soldiers.[1]

These protracted discussions had occupied two months. On the 20th of December the negotiations assumed a new phase. Palmella received word that Donna Maria had been proclaimed queen in Terceira, and that the expedition which Dom Miguel had sent from Portugal had sailed away from the Azores without effecting anything. He again renewed his application for permission for the troops to go to Terceira. Wellington recapitulated his reasons for refusing the request. Arms had already, in defiance of a promise of the Brazilian Ambassador, been conveyed from this country to Terceira. Civil war, according to the information of the British Government, was raging in Terceira; the Portuguese troops at Plymouth had been placed under the command of General Stubbs; and the British Government could not, therefore, permit them, either armed or unarmed, to proceed to the Azores. In accordance with this decision, Captain William Walpole, who was in command of H.M.S. 'Ranger,' was ordered to proceed to the Azores, to inter-

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvi. pp. 433–443.

cept any vessels arriving at those islands, and to prevent the landing of any hostile force; 'and, should they persist, notwithstanding, in hovering about or in making any efforts to effect a landing, you are then to use force to drive them away from the neighbourhood.'[1]

The expedition to Terceira.

Walpole's instructions were dated the 12th of December, 1828. He arrived at Terceira on the 13th of January, 1829. He found that Angra, the capital, was garrisoned by a Constitutional force; but that the armed adherents of Dom Miguel were in possession of the principal parts of the island. Cruising off the Azores three days after his arrival, he sighted four vessels bearing down with a north wind upon Terceira. Intercepting them in accordance with his orders, he discovered that they were conveying to the Azores a Portuguese force of 652 men, under the command of Saldanha. The Portuguese vessels declined to bring to. Walpole fired a shot at them to compel them to do so. One man was killed and another wounded by the discharge; and Saldanha consented to receive a British officer on board. He still, however, persisted in continuing his object and in fulfilling his orders 'to conduct, unarmed, to the isle of Terceira the men that are on board the four vessels in sight.' 'I think it unnecessary to assure you,' so he wrote, 'that I am determined to fulfil my duty at all peril.' 'I also,' was Walpole's answer, 'have an imperious duty to perform, and I cannot allow you to land here or on any of the Azores.' Saldanha, perceiving that further resistance was hopeless, offered to consider himself Walpole's prisoner. Walpole told him that he might go either to France or England, or anywhere he chose, so he quitted the neighbourhood of the Azores. Saldanha, persisting in regarding himself as Walpole's prisoner, turned his vessels towards Europe. After eight days, Walpole, who had hitherto followed and watched him, asked him

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvi. p. 458.

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whether he was going to England. Saldanha, affecting surprise at the question, declared that he did not know. 'You have used over me the discretion of a conqueror; and, at the end of all this, you ask me where I am going. I do not know, sir, where to: the only thing I know is, that I am going wherever you will lead us.' Walpole, finding himself within 500 miles of Scilly, with a strong south-west breeze, declined to give his 'prisoner' the advantage of his further escort, and left him steering for the English Channel. Saldanha eventually found his way to Havre; and the British Ministry, concluding that they had no right to protect the Azores from an attack from France, withdrew the blockading squadron.[1]

Indignation in Britain.

The news of these proceedings occasioned extraordinary indignation in this country. Wellington, and his Ministry, were almost everywhere condemned. It was declared that they had proved themselves the active partisans of Dom Miguel. They had recognised the blockade of Oporto, and so had strengthened the usurper's position; they had fired into a number of unarmed Portuguese, proceeding on a loyal expedition to a loyal island. It was true that, in recognising the blockade of Oporto, Wellington had only followed the usual precedent of attending to facts. It was true also that the expedition which Walpole had turned back from Terceira had notoriously sailed from a British port. The public paid no attention to these facts; they were too angry to do so. They felt that Canning, had he been alive, would have found some pretext for aiding a constitutional queen, and some excuse for thwarting a monarch who was an autocrat, a tyrant, and an usurper. They felt that the influ-

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 459. Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 501. Walpole was a younger son of the Hon. Robert Walpole, and grandson of Horatio, Lord Walpole of Wolterton. He died in London, in 1875. Saldanha was afterwards Portuguese Minister in London. Walpole's nephew married Saldanha's stepdaughter, and was living, with his family, in Saldanha's house at the time of Saldanha's death.

ence of the Foreign Office was suddenly exerted on the side of autocracy; and that the rules and precedents which Canning had employed in aid of Liberalism were being skilfully used in aid of despotism. Several circumstances tended to deepen the feeling of the nation. Little Donna Maria came to England, and the nation was pleased with the child's manners. She flung her arms round George IV.'s neck to thank him for his kindness to her; and George IV. was enchanted with her.[1] The Lisbon Gazette declared that the conduct of the British Government 'had been above all praise;' and approval from such a quarter was regarded as a strong condemnation of the Ministerial policy.[2] Lamb, who had been Ambassador at Lisbon, made no secret of his opinion that the British Government had 'behaved ill and foolishly.'[3] Lamb's authority was naturally regarded as almost decisive in the matter; and the public generally condemned the policy of the Cabinet. Debates were raised in both Houses of Parliament on the foreign policy of the Government; and the duke was severely censured by Mackintosh, Palmerston, Brougham, Lansdowne, and other speakers.[4] It is possible that, if the private letters of the duke had been known, the condemnation would have been even stronger. 'In respect to Portugal,' so he had written privately to Aberdeen, 'you may tell Prince Polignac that we are determined that there shall be no revolutionary movement from England on any part of the world.'[5]

Polignac, to whom Wellington sent this assurance, had been French Ambassador at London since the time of Chateaubriand's retirement. He was on the eve of being promoted to a higher station. During the previous years affairs in France had moved with unexpected

[1] Palmerston, vol. i. p. 204.
[2] Ibid., p. 303, note.
[3] Greville, vol. i. p. 137.
[4] *Hansard*, vol. xix. p. 1719; vol. xxi. pp. 1601, 1795; vol. xxii. p. 591; vol. xxiii. pp. 75, 738; vol. xxiv. p. 126.
[5] On the 1st of January, 1829 (Wellington *Despatches*, vol. v. p. 409).

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rapidity. Chateaubriand, differing from Villèle, had been dismissed from office in 1824. Soon afterwards Louis XVIII. had died, and had been succeeded by his brother, Charles X. The new king had in the first instance been popular with all parties. The Church placed reliance on the character of the monarch; the Legitimists on the preference which he had always shown to them; and the Liberals were reassured by the dexterous replies which he returned to their addresses. Everyone, in short, was willing to hope that Charles X. had gained wisdom from experience, and that he was ready to obliterate the past on his accession to the throne. One of the first measures of his reign dispelled this illusion. The Chambers were invited to vote a large sum of money (30,000,000 francs) in reparation of the losses which the *emigrés* had sustained at the time of the Revolution. The measure was unpopular; and its unpopularity was increased by Villèle coupling it with a proposal to reduce the interest of the National Debt. The holders of Rentes were permitted to exchange the 5 per cent. Stock for either 3 per cent., at 75, or 4½ per cent. Rentes at par. The measure was very similar to that which had already been adopted with advantage in England. But its connection with the indemnity to the *emigrés* gave it a character of its own. Discontented Liberals had some grounds for saying that the interest of the Rentes was reduced, not for the purpose of saving, but for the sake of increasing the huge incomes of the old *emigrés*. The *emigrés* could speak with authority in the Chambers, but the discontent of the fundholders was repeated in every part of the country.

The accession of Charles X.

His first measures.

Villèle's popularity waned with the passing of the law. Towards the end of the year 1825 his unpopularity was increased by some press prosecutions. A Liberal newspaper, the 'Courier Français,' was charged, among other things, with having noticed a petition, from the

Prosecutions of the press.

Protestants of Nevers, which had been presented to the Chamber of Deputies; another Liberal newspaper, the 'Constitutionnel,' was accused of suggesting that Lancastrian schools might be permitted to subsist by voluntary contributions. The cases were so trivial that the Court refused to convict the editors, and satisfied itself with admonishing them to be more careful in future. The victory of the Liberal journals probably increased their violence; the attacks on Royalists, clergy, and Ministry were renewed; and Villèle decided on muzzling the press. A law was introduced in 1826 which forbade the printing of any journal without the name of its proprietor upon it, which allowed only five proprietors to each journal, and which imposed heavy fines on any article outraging either throne or Church. The law passed the Chamber of Deputies, but a new storm of denunciation and abuse burst on the Ministers who had ventured to propose it. Peyronnet, the Minister of Justice, who had framed the law; Villèle, who had sanctioned it, were everywhere abused. Chateaubriand and Royer Collard, who had distinguished themselves by opposing it, could hardly take a walk through the streets of Paris without being mobbed by their admirers. Quailing before the storm, dreading the opposition with which the measure was threatened in the Chamber of Peers, Peyronnet was induced to withdraw the bill. The announcement was received with rapturous enthusiasm. Paris blazed with illuminations; it resounded with the explosion of fireworks. None of the victories which the French had won under the Empire had been celebrated with greater demonstrations of joy.

The Press Bill of 1826.

Villèle's Ministry had suffered a great reverse. Its members were irritated by the defeat which they had sustained. Temper and discretion could alone enable them to retrieve their position, and their anger made them intemperate and indiscreet. The 12th of April was

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the anniversary of Charles X.'s entrance into Paris in 1825. The 12th of April in 1827, however, happened to fall on the last Thursday in Lent; and the celebration of the anniversary was, therefore, postponed till the following Monday. On that day the king received the congratulations of the National Guard, and was prevailed upon to fix a review of the Guard for Sunday, the 29th of April. Everything seemed to favour a magnificent spectacle. The National Guard comprised 20,000 or 30,000 citizens; the king had received assurances of its loyalty to his person; the obnoxious Press Law had been withdrawn during the previous fortnight; and the population of Paris were jubilant at their victory. The king rode down the ranks of the citizen soldiers, and was received with shouts of 'Vive le Roi!' The cheers, however, as he proceeded were mingled with others of 'À bas les Ministres, à bas Villèle!' and the king, curtly remarking that he had come to receive homage, not to listen to remonstrances, rode away home. On his arrival at the Tuileries he was assailed with complaints from the princesses and his ministers. The princesses complained that they had been insulted at the review by seditious cries. His ministers declared that one of the regiments, on its return home, had stopped near Villèle's residence and renewed their denunciations. On the 30th of April, Charles X., surrendering to the solicitations of his Cabinet and his Court, issued a decree dissolving the National Guard.

The dissolution of the National Guard.

The National Guard was dissolved; but the dissolution of the Guard increased the unpopularity of Villèle's Ministry. The press continued to denounce his conduct; the Peers were avowedly hostile to his Government; and a large creation of Peers involved the promotion of so many of the Deputies that it threatened to destroy the Ministerial majority in the Lower Chamber. Villèle had his remedy for all these things. A large crea-

tion of Peers would control one Chamber; a dissolution, followed by a hasty election, might result in a fresh Ministerial majority in the other; and, as the law gave the king power to establish a censorship during the prorogation of the Legislature, the press, notwithstanding the loss of Peyronnet's measure, might be gagged. The session was closed on the 23rd of June, 1827. Two days afterwards an ordonnance was issued re-establishing the censorship. The proceedings of the censors were as arbitrary as their appointment. The 'Journal de Commerce' was prosecuted for copying an article which had already appeared in the 'Gazette de France' under the sanction of the censor. The 'Journal de Bordeaux' was suppressed for inserting in its commercial news 'Les brutes Bourbons sont en baisse'—'Raw sugars of the Isle of Bourbon are falling.' The censor persisted in detecting treason in the phrase, and in construing it, 'These brutes of Bourbons are coming down.'

The censorship established.

The establishment of the censorship had placed an effectual restriction on the press. But the censorship could only be continued while the Chambers were either adjourned or prorogued. The dissolution of the Legislature deprived the king of this power; and a dissolution was even more necessary to Villèle than the censorship. In the course of the autumn seventy-six new Peers were suddenly created. On the 5th of November the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, and new elections were ordered for the 15th. The Ministry hoped that the short interval between the decree and the election would paralyse the Opposition. Their hopes were soon disappointed. The press, freed from the restriction of the censorship, exerted all its influence to defeat the Government. The Ministerial candidates were defeated in Paris; the provinces, imitating the example of the capital, gave the Opposition a majority. But the defeat of the Ministry was less ominous than the events with which it was accompanied. Paris, celebrating

The creation of Peers.

CHAP. XI. 1828.

the victory by an illumination, was the scene of some disorder. The police endeavoured to disperse the mob; and the mob sheltered themselves behind carts and carriages. The police were baffled by these obstructions; and the Parisian populace immediately perceived the advantage which they derived from them. Scaffolding, hastily taken down from new buildings, was quickly converted into barricades. The barricades, as fast as they were destroyed by the police, were re-erected by the mob. The police were even repulsed from one barricade which was stouter than the rest. Carried at last, the time which it took to carry it enabled its defenders to escape down the neighbouring streets. An accidental chain of circumstances, resulting from the election, had educated the Parisians in the art of making barricades.

The barricades.

The events which had thus occurred ought to have enforced a moral on Charles X. Villèle had recommended the disbandment of the National Guard, the censorship of the press, the creation of Peers, the dissolution of the Lower Chamber. Every arbitrary act which the minister had demanded had been conceded by the king; and the election had made Villèle's continuance in office impossible. He resigned; and the king chose as his successor Martignac, an advocate of Bordeaux, and a moderate politician. Martignac's Administration was appointed in the beginning of January 1828; it continued in office till August 1829. During the greater portion of this period it was exposed to no very damaging attack. The king disliked his minister's opinions, but he feared that his removal might necessitate the formation of a still more Liberal Administration. The Liberal majority had little confidence in Martignac; but they preferred him to Villèle. Martignac, in short, had succeeded in forming a Ministry of compromise; and the compromise was, for some time, respected both by Royalists and Liberals. In 1829, however, the Ministry, already fallen into disrepute,

Martignac.

was weakened by the retirement of De Ferronay from the Foreign Office. De Ferronay was one of the most popular members of the Cabinet. His withdrawal, which was solely due to ill-health, impaired its declining authority. His retirement, moreover, led to a vacancy in the Cabinet which it became necessary to fill. It was suspected that the king desired to obtain the services of Polignac; and Polignac gave some confirmation to the report by leaving London and arriving in Paris.

Polignac.

The report of Polignac's admission to the Cabinet provoked so much dissatisfaction that the arrangement was abandoned. The public declared that Polignac was the friend of Wellington, and that the proposal for his appointment was an English intrigue. Charles X. had to confer the portfolio of the Foreign Office on De Portalis, who had succeeded Peyronnet as Minister of Justice. De Portalis' appointment was popular, but it was suspected that it was only provisional; and the Ministry gained little, therefore, from the rejection of Polignac's claims. Their measures, in the session of 1829, seemed at first to promise them more popularity. Nothing in France was so offensive to the Liberal party as the control which the executive exercised over local government. Martignac had the courage to introduce two measures of local government reform. One of these measures regulated the internal administration of the communes; the other the councils of the arrondissements and the departments. De Martignac, retaining the old machinery of prefects and sub-prefects, nominated by the crown, instituted elective councils in commune, in municipality, and in department. The committees to which the bills were referred approved their principles, but engrafted fresh provisions of a liberal character upon them. The Chamber, in defiance of the Ministry, insisted on taking the departmental and more important bill before the measure for regulating communes. The ultra-Royalists combined with the ultra-

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Liberals in a division on the qualification for the franchise; the ministers narrowly escaped a defeat; and Martignac, perceiving that he had lost all control over the Chambers, withdrew his measures.

Charles X. decided to rid himself of Martignac from the moment when Martignac lost the control over the Chambers. But he abstained from making any change while the Chambers were still sitting. The session closed at the end of July, and Polignac was again sent for, and was invited to form a Ministry. Polignac, however, hesitated to accept office until he had reached Paris and ascertained who would act with him; he hesitated to accept office if there were any chance of the Wellington Administration being compelled to retire. Aberdeen, with whom he placed himself in communication, relieved him from all apprehensions on one point.[1] An interview with Charles X. removed his scruples on the other. The Polignac Administration was formed. For better or for worse Charles X. had committed the fortunes of his family to an ascetic old Royalist, whose very name was odious to nine-tenths of the nation.

During the whole of the autumn of 1829 the anger of the people at Polignac's appointment was increasing in intensity. In February 1830 the 'Globe' and the 'National' were prosecuted for articles which reflected on the Ministry. Their editors were condemned to imprisonment and to pay fines. The Chambers met soon after their condemnation. It was at once evident that the Liberals commanded an irresistible majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Using their strength on the first available opportunity, they carried an address to the crown reflecting on the Ministry. "An unjust distrust of the sentiments and reason of France,' so the address ran, 'is now the fundamental idea of the Administration. It afflicts your people, because it is insulting to them; and

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vi. p. 34.

excites their anxiety, because it threatens their liberties.' The address brought the dispute between the Ministry and the people to an issue. It was obvious that Charles X. was compelled to choose between Polignac and the Chamber. Afraid to risk the consequences of a second dissolution, he took the middle course of proroguing the Chamber till September. Constitutional government was practically destroyed by the prorogation. The king and Polignac had made themselves absolute rulers in France.

The prorogation.

During the succeeding months Polignac endeavoured to strengthen his tottering Administration. But his applications for support met with blunt refusals in every quarter. Royalists differed from Liberals in their views of the situation; but Royalists and Liberals were agreed in having nothing to do with Polignac. An expedition to Algeria, which resulted in the acquisition of that country by France, shed a ray of lustre on the French arms; and Polignac seized the opportunity which the campaign afforded him of appealing again to the country. The decree, dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, was issued on the 16th of May; the elections were ordered to commence on the 23rd of June. The country spoke with a voice which was intelligible to the dullest intellect. Nearly all the members who had voted for the obnoxious address of March were returned to the new Chamber. Nearly half the members who had supported it were rejected by the constituencies. The Opposition reckoned on 270 votes in the new Chamber. They thought that, at the very uttermost, Polignac could only rely on 158. The Ministerial journals themselves admitted that the Ministry was in a considerable minority. The dissolution had only intensified the dilemma. The situation in July was ten times as critical as the situation in March. Charles X. had no alternative before him but the dismissal of the Ministry or the repudiation of the election. With the hereditary folly of his race he issued fresh ordonnances

The *coup d'état.*

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suspending the liberty of the press, dissolving the Chambers, and summoning a new Parliament, in which the Lower Chamber was to consist only of the Deputies of departments.

The famous ordonnances, which drove the elder branch of the Bourbons from the throne, were signed on the 25th of July. The historian of Europe has defended the ministers who advised and the monarch who signed them. Ordonnances had previously extended the rights of election. What a royal ordonnance could do a royal ordonnance might undo; and there was, therefore, no technical reason why Charles and Polignac should not sign away, at their will, the liberties of a people. There was nothing reprehensible in the decree. But there was one thing which was reprehensible. There were only twelve cannon in Paris, and only six rounds of grape for each gun.[1] Polignac was right to advise the ordonnances; he was only wrong in neglecting all precautions for enforcing them. The argument, which Alison has thus propounded, is not even accurate. The ministers who advised the issue of the ordonnances were themselves satisfied that they had means for resisting any popular movement. They had no idea of the gigantic power which they had challenged to a conflict. Their ignorance, however, was not of long continuance. On the morning of Monday, the 26th of July, the streets of Paris were filled with anxious groups of agitated persons. The editors of the newspapers, who were more immediately threatened, resolved that the ordonnances were illegal, and that they would continue the publication of their papers. On the

The Revolution of July.

[1] Alison does not apparently appreciate the grim character of his own argument. The king, who signed the ordonnance, was 'a martyr' to duty. The minister, who neglected to provide shot and shell for the people, was only responsible. His argument, that the king was technically justified in signing the ordonnance, is, it must be added, opposed to every contemporary opinion that was worth obtaining.—Cf. Alison, vol. iii. pp. 506, 507, with Crowe's *Reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X.*, vol. ii. p. 402, and *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Hist., p. 183.

27th the *gendarmerie*, with little inclination for the work, seized the presses of refractory journalists. The police only succeeded in doing so after a protracted contest. Their success added 30,000 idle persons, directly or indirectly connected with printing, to the agitated mobs which were already parading the streets of Paris. The Funds fell; the Bank refused to discount bills; the *gendarmerie* proved wholly powerless either to disperse or to control the populace which, like a huge wave, was surging in the streets. At half-past four in the afternoon the troops were ordered to assist the police. They proved, however, as incapable as the *gendarmerie* of clearing the streets. In discharging their duty they found it necessary to fire on the people; and the long summer day closed, the populace irritated by the knowledge that blood had been shed, and encouraged by the inability of the soldiers to preserve order.

Throughout the whole of the 27th the proceedings of the mob had constituted an aggravated riot. On the morning of the 28th the riot wore the aspect of a revolution. The gun-makers were compelled to give up their arms. The tradesmen were forced to take down the royal insignia from their shops. The tricolour was unfurled. The squares and the places were occupied by armed bodies of the populace; and the Government could no longer conceal from themselves or from the public the formidable nature of the movement. Marmont, Wellington's antagonist at Salamanca, was in command of the troops. The Dauphin told him to place them under arms, as 'some windows might be broken.'[1] Marmont disliked the duty, but he divided such of the soldiers as he could spare into four columns and ordered them to clear the streets. Two of these columns were engaged with the populace, and suffered severely from the dropping fire with which they were assailed from

[1] So Marmont himself told Greville (vol. ii. p. 36).

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housetop, window, and barricade. Many of the regiments, sympathising with the mob, refused to fire on the people; and Marmont was compelled to rely on the Guard alone. In the evening he was obliged to withdraw all his troops to the Tuileries, and to send an account of his misfortunes to the king.

The king commanded him to renew the combat. The contest which, in consequence, ensued on Wednesday, the 29th, was even more unequal than that which had occurred on Tuesday, the 28th. The populace, trained to the work, plied the troops from barricade and window with stones and shot. The regiments of the line passed over to the people. The Guard, exhausted and defeated, was compelled to give way. Marmont found it necessary to fall back on St. Cloud, where the king was residing. The king, at last realising the situation,[1] recalled his ordonnances and dismissed his ministers. The concession, which ten days before might have saved his dynasty, was too late. On the 1st of August, Charles was compelled to retire to Rambouillet. On the 2nd of August he abdicated his throne in favour of his little grandson. But Henri V. was no more acceptable to the people than his grandfather. The Provisional Government which was already organised at Paris had decided on offering the throne to the Duke of Orleans, and on the 7th of August Louis Philippe was proclaimed King of the French.[2]

The abdication of Charles X.

These events, rapidly succeeding one another in France, naturally made a profound impression. For the first time since the conclusion of the war the arrangements which autocracy had made at Vienna and Paris had been irrevocably disturbed. An Austrian army had

[1] So ignorant was he of the real situation that when he was told 'Tout est fini' he thought that his informant was announcing to him the victory of his troops.—Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 153.

[2] For the preceding account, see *Ann. Reg.*, 1825, Hist., p. 134; 1827, Hist., p. 196; 1828, Hist., p. 152; 1829, Hist., p. 137; 1830, Hist., p. 166; Crowe's *Reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X.*, vol. ii. pp. 249–449. Greville, vol. ii. p. 36. *Cf.* Alison, vol. iii. 373–588.

stamped out the revolutionary movement in Naples and Piedmont; French bayonets had restored absolute government to Madrid. But no European power was prepared to encounter the risk of an attempt to replace Charles X. on the throne of his ancestors. Autocrats might still claim to rule by the grace of God; but the example of Charles X. had proved that the continuance of their reign depended on the favour of the people. Within a few hundred miles of Paris a little state, whose soil had been the stage of many of the greatest events in history, was watching the progress of revolution in France with anxious expectation. In 1789 Belgium had imitated the example of her neighbour, and, shaking off the torpid rule of her Austrian master, had declared herself independent. But independence was impracticable in the new conditions which had arisen in Europe, and Belgium was gradually absorbed in the mighty state which was extending its authority to every portion of the Continent. Speaking the same language, professing the same religion, animated by the same ideas, enjoying a common literature, separated only by an artificial frontier, French and Belgians became insensibly blended with each other. Political considerations, however, prevented the consolidation of Belgium with France. The diplomatists at Vienna thought it necessary to strengthen adjacent kingdoms, and Belgium was finally annexed to Holland. In one sense the union was defensible. Holland enjoyed more real freedom than any other Continental monarchy; and the Belgians had a voice in the government of the united territory. But, in another sense, the union was singularly unhappy. The phlegmatic Dutch Protestant was as indisposed to unite with the light-hearted Roman Catholic Belgian as the languid waters of the Saone with the impetuous torrent of the Rhone. Different as were the rivers, they met at last; and diplomatists probably hoped that Dutch and Belgians

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would similarly combine. These hopes were disappointed, and the two people, incapable of union, endeavoured to find independent courses for themselves in separate channels.

The union of Holland and Belgium.

The grounds of Belgian dislike to the union were intelligible. Belgium had a population of 3,400,000 souls; Holland of only 2,000,000 persons. Yet both countries had an equal representation in the States-General. Belgium was taxed more heavily than Holland, and the produce of taxation went almost entirely into Dutch pockets. The Court, which was Dutch, resided in Holland. The public offices were in Holland. Four persons out of every five in the public service at home were Dutchmen. The army was almost exclusively commanded by Dutchmen. Dutch professors were appointed to educate the Belgian youths in Belgian schools, and a Dutch director was placed over the Bank of Brussels. The Court even endeavoured to change the language of the Belgian race, and to substitute Dutch for French in all judicial proceedings. The Belgians were naturally irritated at the favour of the Court for Dutchmen. They marked their irritation by mustering in force in the States-General and opposing the financial arrangements. This opposition betrayed the Dutch into one more unjustifiable step. The Government dismissed one or two Belgian officials who had voted against them. The officers who were thus dismissed were regarded as martyrs in their own country. A public subscription was collected to indemnify them for the loss of their salaries. The subscription was successful. Its success suggested the possibility of extending it to other purposes. A journalist, named De Potter, suffering imprisonment for libel, proposed that the subscribers should form themselves into a confederation to indemnify all citizens who had suffered for their patriotism, and to select the functionaries who should be charged with the

The prosecution of De Potter.

duties of state. The Dutch Government, alarmed at the suggestion, prosecuted De Potter and the journal in which his proposal had been made. At the end of April 1830, De Potter was convicted. A little more than a month afterwards, on the 2nd of June, the States-General were dissolved; the elections were peacefully concluded; and the closest observers failed to detect any symptoms of the coming storm on the political horizon.[1]

The storm which was to overwhelm the union was, in fact, gathering in another country. The events of July were to shake Europe to the centre. 'On all sides crowns were falling into the gutter,'[2] and the shock of revolution in Paris was felt perceptibly in Brussels. Nine years before the States-General had imposed a mouture, or tax upon flour. The tax had been carried by a very small majority; and the majority had been almost entirely composed of Dutch members.[3] On the 25th of August, 1830, the lower orders in Brussels engaged in a serious riot, ostensibly directed against this tax. The offices of a newspaper, conducted in the interests of the Dutch, were attacked; the house of the Minister of Justice was set on fire; the wine and spirit shops were forced open; and the mob, maddened by liquor, proceeded to other acts of pillage. On the morning of the 26th of August the troops were called out and instructed to restore order. Various conflicts took place between the soldiers and the people; but the former gained no advantage over the rioters, and were withdrawn into the Place Royale, the central square of the town. Relieved from the interference of the military, the mob continued the work of destruction. Respectable citizens, dreading the destruction of their property, organised a guard for the preservation of order. Order was preserved; but

The revolution in Brussels.

[1] There is a good account of these events in Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 1. See also *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Hist., p. 240.

[2] Lord Dalling, in *Life of Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 2.

[3] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 16.

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the task of preserving it had converted Brussels into an armed camp. It had placed the entire control of the town in the hands of the inhabitants. Men who had unexpectedly obtained a mastery over the situation could hardly be expected to resign the power which events had given to them. They had taken up their arms to repress a mob; victors over the populace, they turned their arms against the Government, and boldly despatched a deputation to the king urging the concession of reforms and the immediate convocation of the States-General.

The king had received the news of the events at Brussels with considerable alarm. Troops had been at once ordered to march on the city; and, on the 28th of August, an army of 6,000 men had encamped under its walls. The citizens, however, represented that the entrance of the troops would be a signal for the renewal of the disturbances; and the officer in command in consequence agreed to remain passively outside the walls. The king sent the Prince of Orange to make terms with his insurgent subjects. The citizens declined to admit the prince into the city unless he came without his soldiers. The prince, unable to obtain any modification of this stipulation, was obliged to trust himself to the people alone. It was already evident that the chief town of Belgium had shaken off the control of the Dutch Government. The king, compelled to submit to the demands of the deputation, summoned the States-General for the 13th of September. But this concession only induced the Belgians to raise their demands. They had hitherto only asked for reforms: they now demanded independence, the dissolution of the union, and the independent administration of Belgium.

The States-General assembled.

The revolution had originally been confined to Brussels: it soon extended to other towns. Civic guards were organised in Liege, Tournay, Mons, Verviers, Bruges, and other places. Imitating the example of Brussels, they

demanded the dissolution of the union between Holland and Belgium. The troops, consisting of a mixed force of Dutch and Belgians, could not be depended on; and the restoration of the royal authority was obviously impossible. On the 13th of September the States-General met. The question of separation was referred to them by the king; and the Deputies leisurely applied themselves to its consideration, in conformity with the tedious rules by which their proceedings were regulated. Long before they had completed the preliminary discussions which they thought necessary the march of events had taken the question out of their hands. On the 19th of September fresh disturbances broke out in Brussels. The civic guard, attempting to quell the riot, was overpowered; and the rioters, elated with their success, announced their intention of attacking the troops, who were encamped outside the city walls. Prince Frederick of Orange, concluding that action was inevitable, at last made up his mind to attack the town. Dividing the forces under his command into six columns, he directed them, on the 23rd of September, against the six gates of the city. Brussels, however, had learned a lesson from Paris in the art of street-fighting. The troops found themselves continually opposed to fresh obstacles, hastily raised, but requiring severe efforts to overcome. Three of the columns succeeded, after a serious struggle, in obtaining possession of the higher parts of the city; but they were unable to accomplish any decisive victory. For four days the contest was renewed. On the 27th of September, the troops, unable to advance, were withdrawn from the positions which they had won. On the following day the Lower Chamber of the States-General decided in favour of a dissolution of the union.

The failure of the Dutch troops, and the dissolution of the union.

The crown of Belgium was evidently dropping into the gutter; but the king decided on making one more effort to preserve it in his family. On the 4th of October

The independence of Belgium.

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he sent the Prince of Orange to Antwerp, authorising him to form a separate Administration for the southern provinces of the kingdom, and to place himself at the head of it. The prince endeavoured to secure the success of his commission by surrounding himself with Belgian advisers, and by promising forgiveness for the past and liberty for the future. Arrangements of this character had, however, already become impossible. On the very day on which the prince reached Antwerp the Provisional Government at Brussels issued an ordonnance declaring the independence of Belgium and the immediate convocation of a National Congress.[1] Four names were appended to the decree which was thus issued. The first of the four was that of De Potter, whose prosecution had been one of the earliest incidents in the revolution. The last of the four was that of Sylvain Van de Weyer, a young Belgian, whose tact, whose ability, and whose manners endeared him afterwards to a large circle of English acquaintances. On the 10th of October, the Provisional Government, following up its former ordonnance, issued a second decree, regulating the composition of the National Congress and the qualifications of the electors. On the 12th the elections were fixed for the 27th of October. On the 10th of November the Congress was formally opened; and on the 18th the independence of the Belgian people was formally proclaimed by its authority.[2]

In the meanwhile the Prince of Orange, tarrying at Antwerp, was forced to watch the progress of events which he was powerless either to guide or to modify. The garrisons which Holland still retained in Belgian fortresses were either unable or unwilling to maintain themselves against the populace; and Antwerp, Maestricht, and Termonde alone continued to yield a doubtful

[1] *State Papers*, vol. xvii. p. 1232.
[2] For these decrees see *State Papers*, vol. xvii. pp. 1232–1241.

obedience to their Dutch sovereign. Powerless to strike, the prince endeavoured to negotiate; offering to ratify the separation of the kingdom, and to place himself at the head of an independent Belgium. The Provisional Government of Belgium, however, declined to recognise any authority except its own; it even refused to conclude an armistice with the prince till the Dutch had been entirely withdrawn from the fortresses which they still held. Foiled in his negotiation, the prince retired from Antwerp. On the 25th of October the Belgian army succeeded in compelling the Dutch garrison to evacuate the town and withdraw into the citadel. On the 4th of November the Ministers of the five great Continental powers, assembled in London at the invitation of the King of Holland, declared that an armistice should immediately be concluded, and that the Dutch troops should be withdrawn from Belgium. The signature of this protocol, on the eve of the meeting of the National Congress, virtually led to the independence of the Belgian people, which the Congress immediately proclaimed.[1]

The effect of the revolution in Britain.

These events created a profound sensation in this country. On ordinary occasions Englishmen pay little or no attention to Continental politics. Intent on their own business, nine out of every ten of them are ignorant of the complications which disturb the counsels of foreign states, and indifferent to the difficulties of foreign governments. But on certain subjects this indifference vanishes, and the nation takes a deep and almost uncontrollable interest in foreign politics. The conditions which are peculiarly calculated to rouse Englishmen from their customary torpor existed in exceptional force during the period of Wellington's Administration. The country had lately witnessed the transition from the foreign policy of Castlereagh to the foreign policy of Canning. Castlereagh had been suspected of holding the Continental doc-

[1] See *State Papers*, vol. xviii. pp. 728–738.

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trine that people only exist for their kings: Canning had based his policy on the modern notion that kings only exist for their people. Castlereagh had riveted the chains of autocracy on the necks of the nations. Canning had broken the fetters with which the people had been bound by their rulers. Castlereagh had stood passively by while Italy had been crushed into submission. Canning had proclaimed the independence of a continent in one hemisphere, and had raised an effectual barrier to autocracy in the other. Old-fashioned diplomatists, trained in the atmosphere of the Foreign Office, had predicted the isolation and impotence of Britain as the result of the new policy which its Foreign Minister was pursuing. The king opposed it; the Tories disliked it; Continental statesmen were alarmed at it. But, notwithstanding the opposition of the king, the dislike of the Tories, and the alarm of foreign statesmen, British influence rose to an importance which it had rarely ever attained before. The Continent watched every action and weighed every word of the British minister; and struggling nationalities, hoping against hope for independence, trusted for their success to the moral support which he was everywhere extending to popular movements. A foreign policy of this character, at once so novel and so important, absorbed the attention of the entire nation. Canning had instilled into it the same interest in the struggle against autocracy which Wilberforce had created thirty years before by his crusade for the slaves.

The foreign policy of Canning

Politicians were taking an exceptional interest in foreign politics when Canning died. His death did not ostensibly modify the policy of the Foreign Office. Wellington, Dudley, and Aberdeen all professed to adhere to the treaty of July. Wellington had been a member of the Cabinet which had despatched the troops to Portugal. But, from the formation of his Ministry, the public felt that the Government was insensibly drifting into a policy

and of Wellington.

which Canning, had he lived, would have avoided. Canning, at the head of a united Europe, had taken a bold and unprecedented step to prevent the subjugation of Greece. Wellington, holding himself more and more apart from the allies, was evidently desirous of breaking the fall of Turkey, and giving as little as possible to the Greeks. Both ministers professed the same principles, and appealed to the same treaty. Both of them accepted it as the basis of their policy. But there was as much difference between their methods of dealing with it as there is between an English and a Dutch auction. The auctioneer names the minimum price which he is authorised to accept for the goods he offers; the itinerant salesman places a value upon them which he never dreams of obtaining. At the genuine sale the price is gradually raised by the competition of buyers; at the Dutch auction the price is gradually reduced till it reaches a level which attracts a purchaser. Canning, like the auctioneer, was continually obtaining better terms for the Greeks; Wellington, like the salesman, was constantly reducing the terms which had been proposed for them. Both ministers started with the same terms, just as auctioneer and salesman may both name the same upshot price. But Canning was always endeavouring to obtain as much as possible for the Greeks; Wellington was always striving to save as much as possible for the Turks.

The unpopularity of Wellington's policy.

Wellington's sympathy for the Turks annoyed the Liberals; the utter failure of his policy annoyed the Tories. Both parties, therefore, regarded with little satisfaction the course which events had taken in Eastern Europe. The simultaneous usurpation of Dom Miguel in Portugal increased Wellington's embarrassments. Wellington ostensibly applied to Portugal the principles which had guided Canning's administration of the Foreign Office. His apologists compared his recognition of Dom Miguel's blockade of Oporto with Canning's recognition

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of the Greek blockade of the Morea. They justified the forcible stoppage of the expedition to Terceira by Canning's advocacy of the Foreign Enlistment Act. In a technical sense Wellington's defence was complete. But Liberal politicians felt that, while the moral influence of Britain, under Canning, would have been exerted in favour of Donna Maria, the moral influence of England, under Wellington, had been afforded to Dom Miguel. During the whole of 1828 and 1829, then, the attention of the nation was mainly directed to the affairs of Portugal and the affairs of Greece, and it was felt that the British policy towards both countries was being silently but effectually modified. In 1830 the follies of Charles X. and his advisers attracted everyone's attention to the affairs of France. The Polignac Administration was formed; and, both in France and in this country, Polignac was associated with Wellington. The French persisted in saying that Polignac would never have formed a Government if he had not received an assurance of Wellington's support; and that he would never have persevered in the course which brought ruin upon his sovereign and himself if he had not received Wellington's encouragement. Everything which Wellington attempted to do in England was compared with what Polignac was doing in France. The most harmless acts of the British Minister seemed injurious when they were interpreted by the light of Polignac's proceedings.

His policy compared with that of Polignac's.

In one sense it was undoubtedly an injustice to Wellington to identify him with Polignac. He himself declared that 'he had never written to Prince Polignac in his life, and that he had never written to Charles X. except when that monarch lost his son, and when his grandson was born, till he came to this country. In fact, he had never corresponded with any French minister without the knowledge of his colleagues. He had no more knowledge of Prince Polignac's proceedings than' Lord Brougham,

'or, most probably, still less.'[1] This contradiction, coming from such a man as Wellington, makes it certain that he had no communication with Polignac, and that he afforded him no encouragement. But it is unfortunately equally certain that Polignac, though he received no direct encouragement from Wellington, regarded Wellington's continuance in office as the best guarantee for his own Ministry. The duke's 'being at the head of the Government in this country would be the greatest inducement for him to accept office in his own.'[2] The suspicions, therefore, both of French and British, were partly justified. There could be no doubt that Polignac identified himself with Wellington, and depended, for the permanence of his rule, on the continuance of the duke's Administration in power.

The effects of the French Revolution.

The Conservatives of Europe were, in fact, rallying round Wellington. The great labour of the duke's life had resulted in the restoration of the Bourbons to France and the annexation of Belgium to Holland; and it was inevitable that he should dislike a revolution which was driving Charles X. from his throne and separating the Dutch and Belgians for ever. His not unnatural desire to preserve inviolate a state of things which he had been instrumental in establishing was regarded by advanced Liberals as an 'odious, insulting, aide-de-campish, incapable dictatorship.'[3] It was thought impossible that any cordiality could exist between Aberdeen, on the one side, and the Liberal Government of France, on the other;[4] and the only possible method of remaining on good terms with France seemed to lie in the formation of a Liberal Administration. The Tories, indeed, had never set any especial value on the French alliance. But the Liberals conceived that the days of July had given the French

[1] *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. iii. p. 1071.

[2] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vi. p. 35.

[3] Lord Durham to Brougham (*Brougham*, vol. iii. p. 44).

[4] Ibid., p. 45.

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fresh claims for their support. 'What glorious beings the French are!' wrote Lord Durham to Lord Brougham.[1] The enthusiasm which the 'glorious beings' had aroused in calmer minds than Lord Durham's imparted an unexpected impulse to Liberal principles, and increased the voting power of the Liberal party in British constituencies.

The death of George IV. and the election of 1830.

The danger, to the Ministry, which thus existed was aggravated by the death of George IV. Parliament was dissolved; and, by a singular accident, the general election which ensued commenced in the very week which was memorable for the Revolution of July. The interest which attached to home politics was lost in the intense excitement which the events at Paris produced. Those 'glorious beings,' the French, had succeeded in ridding themselves of Polignac. British Liberals hoped that it might be equally possible to rid themselves of the politician whom they persisted in regarding as Polignac's representative at home. The large English constituencies, especially, selected in rapid succession Liberal candidates. Sir W. Ffolkes, a Liberal, was elected for Norfolk; Lord Ebrington, an advanced Liberal, for Devonshire. Denman was returned for Nottingham; Hume for Middlesex; and Brougham, who did not own an acre in the county, was elected, without expense to himself and amidst wild enthusiasm, for Yorkshire. But the successes of the Liberals were even less remarkable than the losses of the ministers. One of Peel's brothers was beaten at Norwich; another at Newcastle-under-Lyme. His brother-in-law, George Dawson, was unable to obtain a seat in Ireland, and forced to take refuge in an English borough. Croker, venturing on appealing to the graduates of Dublin, was beaten by Lefroy. There could be no doubt that the stability of the Ministry had been violently shaken by the events of the election.[2]

[1] Lord Durham to Brougham (*Brougham*, vol. iii. p. 44).
[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, p. 145, 146. Brougham, vol. iii. pp. 38.

The Tory party, indeed, still enjoyed a nominal majority in the new Parliament. But the Tory party no longer supported the Wellington Administration. 'The ultra-Tories had never forgiven Wellington and Peel' for emancipating the Roman Catholics; and Tory magnates like the Dukes of Richmond and Newcastle, Tory county members like Sir Edward Knatchbull, who sat for Kent, or Sir Richard Vyvyan, who sat for Cornwall, and Tory lawyers like Sir Charles Wetherell, were more anxious than the Whigs themselves to oust the Ministry.[1] Peel especially was hated with a hatred which almost exceeds belief.[2] It was evident to the dullest intellect that the schism which was splitting up the Tory party was affording the Opposition an unprecedented opportunity. Revolution abroad and distress at home were, at the same time, reviving the demand for Parliamentary Reform.

The discontent of the Tories.

The demand for Parliamentary Reform was simultaneously fortified by a circumstance of another character. In the beginning of 1830 a few persons met together in Birmingham to endeavour to obtain a repeal of the Act of 1819 which had established cash payments. The men who thus assembled were not exclusively Reformers. But the Reformers soon observed the immense advantage which their cause would derive from the deliberations of an organised body. The little meetings, summoned to denounce a metallic currency, were soon converted into great assemblies whose sole object was the promotion of Parliamentary Reform. The voluntary association of a few gentlemen of the midland counties was rapidly developed into the Birmingham Political Union.[3] So rapid was the organisation of the Union that, in the beginning of February 1830, Huskisson stated in the House of Commons that he had seen lately in Birmingham 'an association which, as far as he could perceive its ele-

The Birmingham Political Union.

[1] Brougham, vol. iii. p. 49. [2] Ibid., vol. iii. p. 11.
[3] Le Marchant's *Spencer*, p. 251.

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ments, principles, and operations, seemed exactly formed on the model of the Catholic Association; for it had its subscriptions, its funds, its meetings, its discussions, and its great agitator.' The purpose of this association was to raise a universal cry for Parliamentary Reform—to carry the question by exaggerating the difficulties, abuses, and distresses of the country.[1] The 'agitator' whom Huskisson saw at the head of this formidable body was Thomas Attwood, a gentleman of ability, who afterwards had the honour of becoming the first member for Birmingham. Attwood had considerable qualifications for the position. He was capable of collecting large masses of his fellow-countrymen together, and of preserving them, when they were gathered in obedience to him, from committing any disorders. In February 1830, however, few people foresaw the strength and organisation which the Birmingham Political Union was about to attain. Huskisson's warning fell on ears that refused to hear; and the House lightly rejected a moderate proposal of Reform which was made by Lord J. Russell, and steadily declined to transfer the representation of East Retford to the great town of Birmingham.[2]

The distress of the lower orders.

An agitation, however, was gradually arising which even Tory members could not ignore. In 1816 the distress which had resulted from low wages and dear corn had produced the discontent which resulted in the Spa Fields riots, the march of the Blanketeers, and the rising of the Nottinghamshire Captain. In 1819 high prices and low wages had again been the chief causes of the disorders which culminated in the Manchester massacre. In 1822 and 1823 the distress of the agricultural classes had, for a third time, led to a general desire for change. The agitation on each of these occasions had ceased with the return of better times; and the demand for Reform had, in consequence, seemed to depend on the state of

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxii. p. 347. [2] Ibid., vol. xxii. pp. 859, 915.

the crops or the condition of the money market. The effects of the financial crisis of 1825 and 1826 were unusually permanent. The failure of capitalists in every kind of business naturally involved the loss of large quantities of capital; and the fund out of which the labouring classes were supported was, in this way, reduced. Working men, who had been enjoying a short period of unexpected prosperity, suddenly found themselves worse off than ever. Pauperism increased with a rapidity which had never previously been known; one person in every six in England and Wales was in receipt of relief; and the ratepayers were crushed with the task of sustaining their destitute fellow-subjects.

Its consequences.

A variety of circumstances pointed to the possibility of disturbance. The lower orders were experiencing unusual distress. Political Unions were being successfully organised by capable agitators. Parliamentary Reform was the avowed object of the new organisations; and the ruling classes were stubbornly refusing to remedy even the more glaring abuses in the constitution of the House of Commons. The ruling classes, moreover, who still stood at bay against a nation, were themselves losing the cohesion which had hitherto supported them. The garrison of the citadel had mutinied against its commander, and a continually increasing faction of his troops was desirous of displacing him from his command. The example of the French infused fresh spirit into politicians who were already ready for a great constitutional struggle; and the circumstances which made a general election necessary at the very time at which the crown of Charles X. was tumbling off his feeble head gave the Liberals an opportunity of availing themselves of the unusual excitement in the country. In great constituencies like Yorkshire and Middlesex the people found a vent for their enthusiasm in cheering the popular candidates, and in hooting unpopular county magnates. In large towns

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Agricultural riots.

like Birmingham they found a new occupation in attending the meetings of the Political Union. Agricultural labourers, however, in remote country parishes had neither the excitement of contested elections nor the enthusiasm of popular meetings to fall back upon. The sole object of their humble life was to raise the rate of wages by a few pence a week; the chief article of their simple faith was a belief in the injury that machinery was doing to them. An ignorant labourer, forbidden by the harsh law of settlement to leave his parish, might naturally object to the use of a machine which enabled one man to do the work of three. Farmers who had the audacity to use thrashing machines seemed, in short, responsible for the destitution which surrounded them; and starving men, stung into action by the misery of their families, revenged themselves by burning the ricks of obnoxious farmers. Isolated acts of this character soon led to organised riot. Bodies of men leagued together to destroy the property of those agriculturists who used machinery. Threatening letters, demanding higher wages and the disuse of machines, were despatched to the employers of labour; threatening notices, signed 'Swing,' were affixed to gates or barns. The rioters proved their capacity to act. Night after night the darkness was illuminated by the glare of burning ricks and buildings. The rioters, gaining boldness from impunity, followed up the work of destruction by night with acts of pillage in the day; and the Southern counties of England became the constant scene of acts of incendiarism and violence, carried on with an impunity and boldness which had had no recent parallel in English history.[1]

The upper classes were seriously alarmed at these disturbances. But their alarm did not induce them to reconcile themselves with the duke. The Tories exhibited a distrust of their leaders which made the position

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Hist., p. 130.

of the Ministry difficult and even pitiable. For more than a year Wellington had been doubtful of the propriety of remaining in a position which had become intolerable to himself, and which was evidently distasteful to the country.[1] The events of the session of 1830 had made his situation increasingly irksome to him; the result of the general election had rendered it more and more insecure. 'The utter weakness of our Ministry,' wrote Brougham to the Duc de Broglie, 'you can hardly form an adequate idea of. In Parliament they have no power; no debaters who can be heard; no certainty of carrying a question; and in the country all parties are against them.'[2] It was obvious that the Government required additional strength; and Wellington was at least as alive to the necessity for new men as the rest of the public. There was a small knot of politicians of considerable ability who, he thought, might possibly be persuaded to join his Ministry. Huskisson and his three friends had seceded from the Government in consequence of an important difference on a minor question. Could not they be induced—or could not some of them be induced—to forget their previous differences and reunite with their old friends? William Lamb, who had retired from the Irish Secretaryship in 1828, had since his retirement succeeded to his father's title. In July 1830 the duke made an overture to him for assistance. Lord Melbourne's answer was discouraging. He could not

The duke's efforts to strengthen the Ministry.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vi. p. 294. When writing to Sir William Knighton, on the 10th of November, 1829, he said: 'If I had known in January 1828 one tithe of what I do now, and of what I discovered in one month after I was in office, I should have never been the king's minister, and should have avoided loads of misery! However, I trust that God Almighty will soon determine that I have been sufficiently punished for my sins, and will relieve me from the unhappy lot which has befallen me. I believe there never was a man suffered so much; and for so little purpose.' In June 1830 he formally proposed that he should retire.—*Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 108,

[2] Ibid., vol. vii. p. 174.

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consent to come without Huskisson and Grey. The duke was not prepared to concede such terms as these, and the overture dropped through.[1]

Melbourne had refused to join the Government. But two months afterwards the negotiation was renewed under other circumstances. In September an event took place which was as unexpected as it was unfortunate. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway was formally opened; and the ceremony, which will be more properly described in another chapter, was unfortunately memorable for an unhappy accident in which Huskisson lost his life. The death of Huskisson, however, obviously removed one of the difficulties which prevented the junction of Wellington with the seceders of 1828. A few days after it occurred Wellington sent a common friend to Palmerston, proposing his return to the Cabinet. In many respects such a proposition seemed likely to receive favourable consideration. Palmerston, throughout his political career, had been very closely connected with Wellington and Peel; and he was, therefore, disposed to rejoin the friends with whom he had been connected for twenty years. Yet Palmerston's answer was the same as Melbourne's. He could not come alone; and the friends, without whom he could not come, were Melbourne, Grant, Lansdowne, and Grey. The duke offered to accept Melbourne and Grant; he declined to receive Lansdowne and Grey; and the negotiation terminated. The duke, however, did not despair of obtaining Palmerston's co-operation; and in the latter end of October again renewed his overtures to him for assistance. Croker, who was charged with the negotiation, brought it to an abrupt conclusion by asking Palmerston his views on the Reform of Parliament. Palmerston expressed his determination to vote for Reform, and, with

[1] Bulwer's *Palmerston*, vol. i. p. 382. Mr. Torrens has no original information about the overture.

this expression, the two friends separated—politically speaking—for ever.[1]

The crisis had arrived. Crowns were tumbling into the gutter on the Continent. Incendiaries were firing stacks and farmsteads at home. The larger constituencies had declared against the Government. The Tory representatives of rotten boroughs were in open mutiny against the duke. The country was loudly demanding Reform. The Opposition, meeting at Althorp's chambers in the Albany, were deciding to endorse the demand.[2] On the 26th of October the new Parliament met. On the 2nd of November it was formally opened by the king. The king, who spoke of the Belgians as revolted subjects, had to deplore revolution abroad and disturbance at home. The one he had witnessed 'with deep regret,' the other he was determined to punish and suppress by all the means in his power.[3]

Parliament meets.

The speech had not the effect of diminishing the prevalent anxiety. The deep regret with which the king had noticed the revolution in Belgium might, it was feared, lead to the armed intervention of England. The Funds fell 3 per cent. in consequence. Lord Grey openly deplored in one House the language of the speech which described the Belgians as revolted subjects; and O'Connell, in the other, blessed the huge debt which incapacitated 'the British Government from interposing to crush the growing spirit of human freedom.' 'You see,' said Lord Grey, 'the danger around you: the storm is in the horizon, but the hurricane approaches. Begin, then, at once to strengthen your houses, to secure your windows, and to make fast your doors. The mode in which this must be done, my lords, is by securing the affections of your fellow subjects, and—I will pronounce

The duke's declaration against Reform.

[1] Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. pp. 281, 328. Palmerston, vol. i. p. 383.

[2] Brougham, vol. iii. p. 48.

[3] *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. i. pp. 9, 11.

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the word—by reforming Parliament.' Such a declaration, coming from such a quarter, could not be left unnoticed. Wellington rose to reply to Grey, and at the conclusion of his speech referred to his opponent's desire for Reform. He was totally opposed to all motions of this character. 'He had never read or heard of any measure up to the present moment which could in any degree satisfy his mind that the state of the representation could be improved, or be rendered more satisfactory than at the present moment.' 'He would go still further and say, that, if at the present moment he had imposed upon him the duty of forming a Legislature for any country, and particularly for a country like this, in possession of great property of various descriptions, he did not mean to assert that he could form such a Legislature as they possessed now, for the nature of man was incapable of reaching such excellence at once; but his great endeavour would be to form some description of Legislature which would produce the same results.'[1] The respectable assembly which the duke was addressing was composed of men warmly interested in the system which the Prime Minister had so unnecessarily defended; and who did not, as individuals, possess one tithe of the judgment and sense which were the distinguishing characteristics of the duke. But even Tory Peers, owners of rotten boroughs, were amazed at the opinion which their leader had advanced. The duke sat down; but the buzz of criticism around him was so loud that, whispering to a colleague, he asked the cause of it. 'You have announced the fall of your Government, that is all,' was his colleague's answer.[2]

[1] The quotations in this paragraph are from *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. i. pp. 42, 100, 37, 52. Wellington, eight months afterwards, threw some doubt on the correctness of the report of his speech (*Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 460); but he admitted the substance of it.

[2] Lord Russell's *Recollections*, p. 62. The colleague was probably Lord Lyndhurst. Cf. Greville, vol. ii. p. 53.

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The folly of the duke's declaration was soon evident. In the City, on the following morning, the Funds, which had already fallen to 84, fell to 80. In the House of Commons, on the following evening, member after member rose to protest against the duke's language. 'The Dictator of the Government,' said one, 'had declared that the people did not want Reform, and should not have it. In the name of the people, he replied, that they did want Reform, and that they would have it.' Another member warned the Ministry that 'it would not long depend on the behest of the Duke of Wellington, whether Reform were granted or not.' The Prime Minister, said a third, had said that 'there shall be no Reform. How could his Majesty expect a tranquil reign under such circumstances?'[1] The temper of the House was so evident that Murray, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, ventured on throwing over his chief, and on expressing himself favourable to a moderate measure of Reform.[2] The duke's declaration did not even conciliate discontented Tories. If, said Lord Winchilsea, the duke had fished for 'the support of the high-minded noblemen with whom he was usually united,' he could assure his Grace that 'he might as well attempt to take high heaven by storm.'[3]

Effect of the duke's declaration.

A single indiscreet speech had increased the embarrassments of the Government. Members, who had been ready enough to support the Ministry on the 2nd of November, had made up their minds to oppose it on the 4th.[4] The proceedings of the 5th were equally unfortunate to Ministers. Hume pressed them to pledge themselves to a reduction of taxation; and Peel, declaring the question to be improper, declined to give it any answer whatever.[5] Peel's decision may have been technically

[1] *Hansard*, vol. i. pp. 145, 146, 148. Subsequent references to *Hansard*, except when expressly stated to the contrary, imply the Third Series.

[2] Ibid., p. 167.

[3] Ibid., p. 198.

[4] See Mr. Wood's speech, ibid., p. 213.

[5] Ibid., p. 220.

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justifiable, but it heaped fuel on the flame. Warm language, warmly resented, was used on both sides of the House; and the Members separated, late on Friday evening, heated with what had passed, and full of anxiety for the future.

The City banquet on the 9th of November.

The first week of the session had produced a crisis; but a much more serious catastrophe was in prospect. From time immemorial the 9th of November has been celebrated in the City of London with antiquated observances and princely festivities. On that day some respectable citizen is appointed to a position, eminent for its privileges and its reminiscences, and celebrates his promotion by a banquet, to which all the greatest people in the country think it an honour to be invited. In 1830 the Lord Mayor elect had persuaded the king and queen to distinguish their accession to the throne by coming to his dinner. The City assumed its gayest aspect in anticipation of the Royal visit. But the preparations for the banquet were suddenly disturbed by disquieting rumours. It was reported that the Reformers, irritated into action by the Prime Minister's declaration in the House of Lords, intended to make an attack upon him on his road to the City. A Radical, residing in the City, gave the information, in the first instance, to Peel.[1] The Lord Mayor elect communicated it on Saturday, the 7th of November, to Wellington, officiously suggesting that the duke should come strongly and sufficiently guarded. Ministers, already alarmed at the disturbances in the country, and at the denunciations with which they were themselves everywhere assailed, met in haste on the Saturday to consider these communications.

It happened that the unpopularity of the ministers was largely increased by a circumstance for which the present generation owes them a debt of considerable gratitude. The noble manner in which Peel had adopted

[1] Spencer, p. 255, note.

Mackintosh's proposal for the reform of the Criminal Code has already been related in a previous chapter of this history. But Peel was a statesman who had an inherent dislike to half-measures. His reform of the Criminal Code—broad and efficient as it had proved—was in many respects incomplete; and he desired to supplement it by simplifying and amending the whole system of criminal jurisprudence. The Minister, however, in his desire to make the Criminal Code more humane, had always found himself face to face with one difficulty. The police were notoriously inefficient; and till some force could be constituted which was capable of coping with the criminal class innocent citizens could not be deprived of the security which they were supposed to derive from cruel punishments, and could not be forbidden to protect themselves by setting spring-guns and steel-traps in their gardens, fields, or coverts. Public opinion, however, gradually revolted against the notion that a man might protect either his game or his garden by a deadly instrument. An unfortunate accident, by which a wholly innocent person met with a lingering and horrible death in 1824, increased the popular feeling against the practice;[1] and, in 1825, a Norfolk nobleman, Lord Suffield, introduced a bill declaring spring-guns illegal. The bill did not become law; and Lord Suffield, discouraged by his defeat, abstained from pressing it in 1826. Early in 1827, however, a man, named Guthrie, was killed in Scotland by a spring-gun—as dozens of Englishmen had been killed before him. The English judges had always been in the habit of absolving the persons who had set the gun. In Scotland, Lord Home's keeper was indicted for murder for setting it. The prisoner's counsel objected to the relevancy of the charge, and insisted on raising the general question whether a spring-gun might be lawfully set. The High Court of Justiciary unanimously decided that a

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1824, Chron., p. 153.

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spring-gun was an illegal engine. Before even the decision had been given Parliament had adopted Lord Suffield's measure. Poor Guthrie's death, and the firm attitude of the Scotch judges, had been instrumental in preventing a horrible and barbarous practice.[1]

The institution of the Police Force.

Peel was out of office when Lord Suffield's bill became law. On his return to power in 1828 his attention was at once directed to the state of crime in the metropolis. If people were prevented from protecting their own property by the use of murderous instruments, it became the obvious duty of the State to protect it for them. Early in 1828 Peel obtained a select committee to inquire into the state of the police of the metropolis and the adjoining districts.[2] The committee which was thus appointed agreed upon a report, to which some reference has already been made in this work; and, in accordance with this report, Peel, in 1829, introduced a measure for establishing a police force.[3] The bill became law; and the admirable force, which has ever since been charged with the duty of maintaining order in London, was instituted. The lower orders, however, who had been long accustomed to disturbances, and the criminal classes, who had directly profited from the old system which the new police had superseded, were irritated at the institution of a force which was both respectable and efficient. This irritation found expression in nicknames which are apparently likely to be engrafted permanently into our language. The street Arab, who hated the new police and the minister for instituting it, gave the constable the name of the statesman and derisively called him a 'Peeler.' The urchin—half-outcast, half-criminal—who was at once frightened and amused

[1] The case will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1827, Chron., p. 116; the debate on Lord Suffield's bill, in *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xii. pp. 641, 1014; vol. xiii. p. 1260; and vol. xvii. p. 295. The Act was 7 & 8 Geo. IV., c. 18.

[2] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xviii. p. 798.

[3] Ibid., New Series, vol. xxi. p. 868.

by the dignified bearing of the new officer, called him a 'Bobby.' Sir Robert Peel's Christian name and surname had thus both been employed to supply nicknames to the new force.

The Royal visit to the City postponed.

The unpopularity of the new force made the ministers attach exceptional importance to the warning which the Lord Mayor elect had given them. For themselves they had few apprehensions; but they feared that the king's visit to the City might be seized as an opportunity for an attack upon the new police.[1] Wellington thought that the good which might result from the king's visit was not worth the risk of a possible disturbance; and the Cabinet, in consequence, decided that the king and queen should not go to the dinner. The decision was nearly creating the disturbance which it was intended to prevent. It was everywhere believed that the Ministry was apprehensive of immediate rebellion; and men purchased arms and strengthened the fastenings of their houses, in the expectation that the scenes which had deluged Paris and Brussels with blood would be acted in London. The excitement was, perhaps, the greater from the Ministry's decision being announced on a Saturday. The people had nothing to do on the Sunday, and had, therefore, full leisure to meet and discuss the alarming news. Fear is more contagious than fever; in a state of panic the timid are the leaders; and throughout the Sunday, therefore, vague apprehensions, which

[1] The anonymous placards and handbills circulated at the time were very alarming. One of them ran, 'To arms! to arms! Liberty or death! London meets on Tuesday next, an opportunity not to be lost for revenging the wrongs we have suffered so long. Come armed, be firm, and victory must be ours.' Another ran, 'Liberty or death! Englishmen! Britons!! and honest men!!! The time has at length arrived—all London meets on Tuesday. Come armed. We assure you from ocular demonstration that 6,000 cutlases have been removed from the Tower for the use of Peel's bloody gang. Remember the cursed speech from the throne!! These damned Police are now to be armed. Englishmen, will you put up with this?'—*Hansard*, vol. i. p. 271. See, for the correspondence between the Lord Mayor elect and Peel, *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Chron., p. 185.

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no one attempted to define, spread with alarming rapidity. The Funds had already fallen 4 per cent.; on the Monday they dropped an additional 3 per cent. The streets in the morning were thronged with people anxiously speculating on the immediate future. Both Houses of Parliament were crowded in the evening with members, angrily condemning the conduct of the ministers. Waithman, an alderman of London, and one of the members for the City, increased the general feeling against the Government by declaring that the Court of Aldermen had felt no apprehensions of a riot, and that they had not known of the letter of the Lord Mayor elect to Wellington. The ministers, Waithman declared, had acted with such precipitation that they had not waited to test the authenticity of their information. Twenty-four hours after they had formally postponed the dinner they had actually sent into the City to inquire whether the letter on which they had acted was genuine or not.[1] The postponement of the dinner was declared by Lord Wellesley 'the boldest act of cowardice he had ever heard of.'[2]

In the meanwhile the short autumn day was drawing to a close. Those who thought that their houses might be the object of popular attack were taking steps to place them in defence. The police were drawn up, at specified stations, in military order; troops were moved up to London; and large numbers of special constables were sworn in to assist the police. Happily, however, these precautions proved unnecessary. Some slight disturbances occurred in various parts of the town. In one or two instances the mob and the police came into collision. But, on the whole, the night passed away peacefully. The vast crowds with which the streets were thronged were orderly and good-humoured; and the populace had so little fear of riot that women and children mingled freely

[1] *Hansard*, vol. i. p. 282. [2] Greville, vol. ii. p. 57.

with the mob and criticised the devices with which some of the houses were decorated. The anonymous placards which had frightened the Ministry into their bold 'act of cowardice' had fortunately failed to stimulate the populace into action.[1]

Hostility against ministers.

The town had been spared the calamity of a riot. But the reputation of the Ministry had been hopelessly damaged. It was everywhere felt that the king and queen might have gone to the City banquet without serious risk of disturbance, and that their visit had been postponed because ministers had feared the consequences of their own presence in the procession. Many even of his political opponents deplored the unreasoning and unreasonable hostility with which Wellington was everywhere assailed.[2] But friends and opponents were both agreed that the statesman who was the object of such indiscriminate abuse was disqualified for conducting the affairs of the country. Brougham had given notice of a motion for Reform on Tuesday, the 16th of November. The Ministry believed that they were capable of defeating it. But they had not much confidence in the possibility of rejecting it by a large majority. A narrow division, however, would obviously encourage the Reformers to fresh attacks; and those who were best acquainted with Wellington therefore believed that if the majority were small he would retire from office.[3] Everyone, then, awaited with anxiety and impatience the result of Brougham's motion. The great battle of Reform would apparently decide the fate of the Ministry, and would possibly determine the future of the nation. Both sides marshalled their supporters, like the combatants at a tournament, and prepared for the affray. One of the combatants at these mediæval combats must occasionally have fallen,

[1] The disturbances which did take place are related in *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Chron., p. 190. They were very unimportant. Cf. *Hansard*, vol. i. p. 351; and Greville, vol. ii. p. 55.

[2] See especially Denman's speech (*Hansard*, vol. i. p. 294).

[3] Greville, vol. ii. p. 60.

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before the supreme moment of conflict arrived, from his horse stepping on unsound soil or slippery ground. In similar fashion, while the nation was awaiting the division on Reform, the Wellington Administration fell before an obstacle which no one had noticed; and the great contest, which everyone had been expecting, was reserved for another occasion.

The Civil List.

The accession of a new king to the throne necessitated, of course, the revision of the Civil List. George IV. had been granted a Civil List of 850,000*l.* But the Irish and Scotch Civil Lists and the casual revenues had increased this amount to 1,221,000*l.* It was proposed that William IV. should receive a Civil List of 970,000*l.*, and that he should be relieved from some of the anomalous charges which his predecessors had defrayed.[1] The arrangement contemplated a trifling saving; but, in the opinion of the Opposition, the saving was much too small. Sir Henry Parnell had sat for many years as member for Queen's County: he enjoyed a considerable reputation as a professed economist. His works on financial reform and on banking may still be studied with advantage. He had filled the position of chairman of the Finance Committee of 1828. He at once expressed his dissatisfaction with the new Civil List, and suggested that its details should be referred to a select committee. A short discussion ensued, in which many of the charges on the Civil List were severely criticised, and in which the Ministry were charged with a breach of faith. In his speech from the throne at the commencement of the session the king had declared that he had placed his interest in the hereditary revenues unreservedly at the disposal of the House

[1] *Hansard*, vol. i. p. 434. *Return of Public Inc. and Exp.*, session 1869, part ii. p. 605. There is a remarkable memorandum in Wellington *Despatches*, vol. vii. p. 130, signed 'George R.'—apparently a misprint for William R.—which indicates that William IV., at the commencement of his reign, was willing to strike all anomalous charges off the Civil List, and to reduce it to its present condition.

of Commons. The announcement at the time had produced general satisfaction; but the plan of the Ministry showed that the king had not parted with the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster or the Duchy of Cornwall, the only hereditary revenues of importance. It was in vain that Peel took pains to explain that the revenues of the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall did not form a part of the hereditary revenues of the crown. The defence was technically complete; but the House was in no humour for technical arguments. The discussion was adjourned till Monday, the 15th of November, the members going home dissatisfied both with the king and with the Ministry.[1]

The Ministry, defeated, resigns.

On the Monday the discussion was renewed. Parnell formally proposed his motion for referring the Civil List to a select committee. The Chancellor of the Exchequer met it with a decided negative. The House, which was impatient for a division, only waited for one or two speeches. At an early hour in the evening the question was put. Many of the duke's supporters were absent from the division. Advanced Tories like Sir E. Knatchbull and Sir R. Vyvyan voted against him. His own nephew, Long Pole Wellesley, supported Parnell. Palmerston and Wynn threw the weight of their influence into the scale against the Ministry. These various defections made the result of the division certain. Parnell's motion was carried by 233 votes to 204. The duke, finding it impossible to command the support of the Tories, and impracticable to carry on the Government without their assistance, tendered his resignation to the king; and the king sent for Lord Grey and authorised him to form a Ministry.

Lord Grey.

Grey had arrived at the period of life at which men begin to seek for a little leisure. He was sixty years old. Forty-four years had passed since his entrance

[1] *Hansard*, vol. i. pp. 429–471.

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into the House of Commons. Thirty-seven years had passed since his memorable motion on Reform. For nearly twenty-four years he had been condemned to enforced idleness as the leader of a weak and disjointed Opposition. During the whole of his long career he had only had one opportunity of acquiring experience in office. In 1830 he would gladly have yielded place and power to a younger and a stronger man. Althorp, however, whom Grey wished to nominate for the first place in the Ministry, was with difficulty persuaded to take the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the lead of the House of Commons. He positively refused either to accept office or to assume the lead unless Grey was placed at the head of the Government; and Grey found himself, in consequence, compelled to accept the position of Prime Minister.

Lord Grey forms a Ministry.

The Cabinet was formed with unusual ease. Lord Lansdowne and Lord Holland, who twenty years before had been Grey's colleagues in the Talents Administration, became President of the Council and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Lord Carlisle accepted a seat in the Cabinet without office. The Duke of Richmond was rewarded for deserting the Tories with the Post Office. His appointment was undoubtedly suggested by the desire of the new minister to found his Ministry on the widest possible basis. With the same view Goderich was appointed to the Colonial Office; and Canning's other followers were all selected for responsible situations—Palmerston at the Foreign Office, Melbourne at the Home Office, Charles Grant at the Board of Control. Graham, the vigorous advocate of retrenchment, was placed at the Admiralty; and Grey's son-in-law, Durham, who had been identified with Radical Reform since his motion in 1821, accepted the office of Privy Seal.[1] The same desire was manifested to secure the

[1] The *Ann. Reg.* says that Lord Auckland, who was President of the

maximum of support in the disposition of the places outside the Cabinet. The Grenvillites were propitiated by the appointment of Charles Wynn to the Secretaryship-at-War. Wellington's own brother, Lord Wellesley, became Lord Steward. Lord John Russell was appointed to the Paymastership of the Forces; and a still younger man, Edward Stanley, a grandson of the Earl of Derby, was made Chief Secretary for Ireland. Stanley was thirty-one years old. He had originally been brought into Parliament for the small borough of Stockbridge, and the interest of his family had more recently obtained for him the favour of the electors of Preston. Preston was, at that time, the only large borough in England which enjoyed a really popular franchise; and the electors, doubting the sincerity of the new minister, refused to re-elect him, preferring to him Hunt, the hero of Peterloo. Stanley was compelled to take refuge in the close borough of Windsor, where the king's interest easily secured his return. His failure was, however, doubly annoying to the Ministry. Stanley's rejection by a popular constituency was a bad omen for the popularity of the new Government; and the victory of the great Radical agitator was even more embarrassing than the defeat of the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The incidents of the election had, however, brought out in strong relief the characteristics which were to distinguish the new minister in a long political career. The dexterity and pluck, the versatility and eloquence, displayed by Stanley on the hustings stood him afterwards in good stead when he was assailed by a greater orator and a greater agitator than Hunt in the House of Commons.

Stanley defeated at Preston by Hunt.

The composition of the Ministry, as a whole, had been attended with little difficulty. But there was one

Board of Trade, was also a member of the Cabinet. *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Chron., p. 216. But the editor appears to have been mistaken on this point.

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formidable politician who had not hitherto been provided for. No member of the Whig party had either the ability or the position of Brougham. Yet there was no member for whom it was more difficult to provide. Brougham himself was anxious to obtain the Mastership of the Rolls; but the Rolls was the one office which the king and Lord Grey were determined not to give him. A Master of the Rolls was independent of the Government; he could retain his seat in the House of Commons; and Brougham, independent of the Government, Master of the Rolls, and member for Yorkshire, would possess a power which would be capable of overturning a Ministry. Grey desired that Brougham should become Attorney-General. But Brougham resented an offer which would have placed him outside the Cabinet, which would have made him subordinate to Althorp, and which would have exposed him to the expense of a possible contest for Yorkshire. The arrangement seemed likely to fall through; and Brougham, in evident anger at the slight which he thought was cast upon him, took two occasions to express openly in the House of Commons that he had '*nothing to do*' *with the new Government*, and that the change in the Administration could not 'by any possibility affect' him. The king and the minister were both disconcerted by these declarations and alarmed at the possible consequences of Brougham's opposition. The king, however, suggested that the difficulty might be solved if the restless spirit could be appeased by the offer of the Chancellorship. Grey, who had hoped to persuade Lyndhurst to remain in the office which he had already held under three successive ministers, reluctantly assented to the suggestion; and Brougham, solemnly protesting against the sacrifice which was imposed upon him, gladly accepted the splendid post and became Chancellor and Lord Brougham and Vaux. His mother had the judgment to perceive that, in taking place, he sacrificed

Brougham accepts the Chancellorship.

power. Some of the more farsighted of his acquaintances agreed with her opinion. Brougham, they said, was now *Vaux et præterea nihil.*[1]

The Administration which was thus formed had one remarkable peculiarity in its composition. It had attained power on the expectation that it would propose a democratic measure of Reform; and it was, perhaps, the most aristocratic Cabinet of the century. Only four of its members sat in the House of Commons; the first of these was the heir-apparent to an English earldom; the second was an Irish Peer; the third was a baronet of large property; and the fourth a Scotch landowner, whose possessions qualified him for the Peerage which he soon afterwards received. The composition of the Cabinet apparently afforded a guarantee against the adoption of any Radical measures. The first acts of the new Ministry, too, reassured the timid politicians, who had been startled by the accession to office of a Government pledged to Reform. The disturbances which had occurred in the agricultural counties of Southern England throughout the autumn were becoming very grave. Isolated outrages had been succeeded by organised riots; and the rioters, who levied contributions, destroyed machinery, and burned farm-buildings, arrayed themselves in formidable bodies, which the magistrates were powerless to resist. In Wiltshire a regular battle took place between the rioters and the Hindon troop of Yeomanry; and one man was killed and several others were wounded in the encounter. In Hampshire the rioters moved in bodies 1,500 strong; and in Berkshire the magistrates found it necessary to obtain the assistance of a detachment of the

Agricultural disturbances.

[1] See Campbell's *Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 376; Le Marchant's *Spencer*, p. 261; Roebuck, vol. i. p. 465. Torrens' *Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 344; Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 72. *Hansard*, vol. i. pp. 563, 567; and Greville, vol. ii. p. 89. Brougham was violently attacked for accepting office after his repeated declarations. *Vide, inter alia*, Croker's speech, in *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. i. p. 637.

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Guards and of a cavalry regiment to arrest the ringleaders of the mob.[1] Writers, whose influence was unfortunately greater than their judgment, attempted to convince the unfortunate labourers that they were acting wisely and justly in destroying the property of their employers. Cobbett, in the 'Political Register,' wrote a series of letters on a text, extracted from one of his former papers, 'At last it will come to a question of actual starvation or fighting for food; and, when it comes to that point, I know that Englishmen will never lie down and die by hundreds by the wayside.'[2] Carlile, a writer who years before had been punished for a blasphemous publication, told the wretched labourers,[3] 'You are much to be admired for everything you are known to have done during the last month. In war all destructions of property are counted lawful upon the ground of that which is called the law of nations. Yours is a state of warfare, and your ground of quarrel is the want of the necessaries of life in the midst of abundance. Neither your prudence nor your silence has obtained for you the least respectful attention. It is only now, that you begin to display your physical as well as your moral strength, that your cruel tyrants treat with you, and offer terms of pacification.'[4]

Reckless advice of this kind, offered by such men as Carlile and Cobbett, naturally inflamed the furious discontent which was already spreading through the Southern counties. Immediately after accepting office the new Cabinet found it necessary to issue a proclamation stating their determination to repress all unlawful assemblies and all acts of outrage, and to promise the Lords Lieutenant of the disturbed districts every possible assistance

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, Chron., p. 200. Melbourne, vol. i. p. 348. Greville, vol. ii. p. 69.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 95.

[3] Ibid., p. 18; and Denman, vol. i. p. 332.

[4] Cobbett's articles were brought before Parliament by Trevor, who applied to Cobbett the famous 'Quousque tandem' speech of Cicero against Catiline.—*Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 71.

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1830.

in quelling disorder. Almost immediately afterwards they decided on the appointment of a Special Commission to try the rioters in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire.[1] The Special Commission was opened on the 18th of December, at Winchester. No fewer than 1,000 individuals were tried before it, 700 of whom were from Hampshire and Wiltshire alone;[2] and the labouring classes, aroused to a consciousness of their folly by these proceedings, gradually abstained from outrages which they found themselves unable to commit with impunity, and relapsed into their ordinary condition of torpid submission to the hardships of their inevitable and hereditary lot.

Special Commissions to try the rioters.

The proceedings of the Special Commission had relieved the Southern counties from a reign of terror which had no parallel in recent English history. But the Ministry considered that the rude labourers, whom it had been necessary to punish for their share in the riots, were in reality less culpable than the writers who had encouraged them to persevere in their foolish and mischievous conduct. The moral guilt of Carlile and Cobbett was greater than that of an uninformed rustic; and the conviction of these writers seemed, therefore, of more importance than the execution of a dozen starving workmen. Carlile was tried at the Old Bailey, on the 10th of January, 1831. The jury, after many hours' consultation, found him guilty of addressing inflammatory language to the labouring classes; and the Recorder, before whom he was tried, sentenced him to pay a fine of 2,000*l.* and to be imprisoned for two years.[3] Cobbett's trial was postponed till the following July; and the postponement possibly saved him from a similar punishment. In January

Trials of Carlile and Cobbett.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 304. Corresp. of Earl Grey and Wm. IV., vol. i. pp. 1–4, 18; and Melbourne, vol. i. pp. 350–354.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1830, p. 200; and 1831, Chron., vol. i. pp. 5, 9.

[3] Denman, vol. i. p. 331. *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 18.

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the country had been seriously alarmed at the riots and outrages which were desolating the Southern counties; in July it was violently agitated by the rejection of the first Reform Bill. Language which sensible tradesmen, afraid for the safety of their wares, were ready enough to vote seditious in January, seemed mild and even praiseworthy in July. Carlile, in the former month, had been regarded as a malefactor; Cobbett, in the latter month, was applauded as a hero. He entered the court amidst the cheers of his admirers. He concluded a long defence of his own conduct amidst demonstrations of approval which could with difficulty be suppressed. He called as witnesses Brougham, the Chancellor; Melbourne, the Home Secretary; and Lord Radnor, who had obtained repute, under the courtesy title of Lord Folkestone, as a Liberal member of Parliament. The jury, staggered at the ability and the assurance of the accused, were unable to agree upon a verdict. After keeping them locked up for fifteen hours, the Chief Justice, Lord Tenterden, had the humanity to discharge them; and Cobbett had the satisfaction of reflecting that a prosecution, reluctantly undertaken by a Whig Government and a Whig Attorney-General, had wholly failed.[1]

Long before Cobbett's prosecution had been concluded a series of events had occurred which had altered the direction of men's thoughts and modified their opinions. On assuming office Lord Grey had publicly stated that his Administration was based on the policy of reforming Parliament, of promoting economy, and of preserving peace.[2] A measure of Parliamentary Reform could not, however, be brought forward without adequate preparation; and, in the first weeks of the session, the time of Parliament was consequently occupied with other matters. There were three subjects, of minor or

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 95. Denman, vol. i. p. 333.
[2] *Hansard*, vol. i. pp. 606, 610.

temporary importance, which it was necessary for the Government to deal with. In the first place, the presumptive heir to the throne was a child who had not yet entered her teens; her uncle, the king, was of an advanced age; and, in the possible contingency of his death, a Regency would be necessary. The Whigs had found fault with the Tories in the previous summer for allowing Parliament to be dissolved without providing for the eventuality;[1] and it was, therefore, clearly impossible for them to delay the provision any longer. In the next place, the Wellington Administration had fallen in an attempt to arrange the new Civil List. The king could not be left without adequate provision for the support of his dignity, and the complicated questions involved in this matter had accordingly to be decided. In the third place, the professions of economy which the Prime Minister had publicly made had to be redeemed; and the financial measures of the year had to be settled.

Arrangements for the Regency.

Little difficulty was experienced on the first of these questions. On the evening on which the Wellington Administration had experienced its final defeat in the House of Commons, Lyndhurst, as Chancellor, had introduced the Regency Bill in the House of Lords. The measure was a very simple one. It contemplated the natural and sensible arrangement that, in the event of a Regency becoming necessary, the Princess Victoria's mother should be the Regent during her daughter's minority, without a Council either to assist or to control her. Lyndhurst's proposal, and the speech in which he introduced it, excited warm approval. Grey, after he had accepted office, begged Lyndhurst to go on with the measure; and Lyndhurst, who had been made Chief Baron of the Exchequer, consented to do so.[2] The Regency

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. xxv. pp. 828, 1067.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. i. pp. 500, 996. Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 70.

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The Civil List.

question was in this way easily concluded. But the settlement of the Civil List was beset with graver difficulties. The victory which the Whigs had achieved upon this subject, and the language which some of them had used, were sources of embarrassment to them. They were pledged by their own votes to refer the Civil List to a committee; and the king was annoyed at the notion of the details of his expenditure being investigated by a tribunal of this character. They had, some of them, loudly insisted that the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster should be surrendered; and the king regarded the suggestion with the utmost jealousy. In his view, the Duchy of Lancaster was the 'only remaining pittance' of a 'private and independent estate' which his ancestors had enjoyed for centuries.[1] Grey knew that in the next few months he would have to strain the temper of the king in many ways; and wisely forebore, at the very outset of his Administration, from insisting on a point which was, after all, only secondary in importance to Reform. William IV.'s indignant protest has preserved, even to the present day, the revenue of the Duchy of Lancaster for the personal use of the Crown. But even the king's indignation could not avert the appointment of the committee which Parnell had obtained. Majesty had to submit to the salutary ordeal to which every public officer is liable, and to assent to the principle that its salary, like that of other functionaries, is a matter within the discretion of Parliament.

The new Ministry, however, did something more than refer the Civil List to a committee. It revised the proposal which had been made by its predecessor. Goulburn had proposed that the Civil List should be fixed at 970,000*l.* Althorp withdrew from it the diplomatic salaries and other charges, which he placed on the Con-

[1] Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. i. p. 11.

solidated Fund, and fixed the residue at 510,000*l.* The reduction, he admitted, was only apparent. Its merit consisted in withdrawing from the control of the Crown various charges over which previous monarchs had unrestricted authority. Economical gentlemen, who had expected the best results from Parnell's victory, were dismayed at this proposal. The pensions granted by the late sovereign technically expired on his demise; and professed economists thought that the opportunity should be taken to terminate the least defensible of these charges. It so happened that public attention had been lately attracted to the Pension List. A motion which Graham had made for a return of all Privy Councillors with more than 1,000*l.* a year had been met by a return of all persons enjoying more than 1,000*l.* a year from the State. The Government, in granting the larger return, imagined that they had smothered the motion. They little anticipated the use which would be made of the facts which they were giving. The information, carefully collated and supplemented with other matter, was embodied in the 'Black Book,' a work which, with many exaggerations and some faults, contains a more remarkable picture of the times than any other publication which can be mentioned. Every sinecurist, every pensioner, every pluralist suddenly found himself held up to public scorn. Men whose names figured in the Black Book were filled with terror; men who, fortunately or unfortunately for themselves, were omitted from it were filled with indignation. The public generally vehemently demanded the withdrawal of the pensions; Brougham himself recommended that they should be given up; and it required all the tact of the Prime Minister and all the firmness of Althorp to save the pensioners. The great Whig Ministry was on the point of being wrecked on this unfortunate question.[1]

The Pension List.

[1] The king felt very strongly on the point, and, it must be added,

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Althorp's proposal was, however, accepted; and the Civil List was referred to a select committee.[1] After an inquiry which lasted for about six weeks the committee agreed upon a report. All that the committee did was to recommend the reduction of the salaries of the Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, the Grooms of the Bedchamber, and some other officers—a reduction which would effect a saving of about 11,000*l.* a year. The king was very much annoyed at these recommendations. He regarded his lords, his equerries, and his grooms as his personal servants; and he confessed that the proposal to reduce their salaries was not palatable to him.[2] The economists, on the other hand, were equally disappointed with the report of the committee. The great question, on which the Wellington Administration had fallen, had resulted in the recommendation of a paltry saving of only 11,000*l.* a year. The mountain had been in labour, and the mouse had been the result.[3] The disappointment was so great, the saving was so small, that the Government ventured on disregarding the report of the committee altogether, and on adhering to their original proposal that the Civil List should be fixed at 510,000*l.* a year; and this proposal was ultimately adopted by Parliament.[4]

The Ministry had undoubtedly lost some reputation among their friends by the manner in which they had

very honestly. He was quite ready to submit to any checks upon himself; but, wrote Sir H. Taylor, 'he dreads the idea of being called upon to visit the sins of his forefathers upon the objects of their favour and benevolence.' Few royal sayings have been either happier or more creditable.—*Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV.*, vol. i. p. 120. Lord Grey's opinions were similar to the king's. 'My own feelings on this subject are so strong that, if the House of Commons decides upon reducing the pensions, I should be very much inclined to retire from the Government.'—Ibid., p. 113. Althorp told the Chancellor that 'he was perfectly ready to resign' upon it.—*Spencer*, p. 272. Cf. also his declaration in Parliament. *Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 213. For the indignation excited by the Black Book, see Greville, vol. ii. p. 79.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ii. pp. 152–189.

[2] *Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV.*, vol. i. pp. 146, 149.

[3] The '*Parturiunt Montes*' was quoted by Grove Price in the House. —*Hansard*, vol. iii. p. 1111.

[4] Ibid., pp. 963, 1113.

dealt with the Civil List. Their action in supporting Parnell's motion had encouraged expectations of universal retrenchment; and the disappointment was proportionate when it was discovered that there was to be no retrenchment whatever. There was, however, a very general impression that the shortcomings of the Civil List would be redeemed by ample reforms in the Budget. In dealing with the Civil List, Althorp might be fettered by his obligations to his sovereign. In dealing with the ordinary expenditure of the State he would be under no obligations to anyone. Althorp was nothing if he were not an economical reformer. In 1830 he had supported Graham's motion; he had even supported a proposal of Hume's for the abolition of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.[1] He owed his original selection as leader of his party to his determination to enforce retrenchment.[2] On the night on which he took his seat after his re-election for Northamptonshire he announced his intention to move for a Select Committee 'to inquire into what reductions can and ought to be made in the salaries and emoluments of all officers in his Majesty's service being members of Parliament;'[3] and, in moving for the appointment of the committee, he declared his 'firm determination to enforce the most rigid economy, and to effect a thorough retrenchment in every department of the State.'[4]

The Budget.

Up to the close of 1830, then, Althorp had distinguished himself as an uncompromising advocate of economy and retrenchment. Every day's experience in office convinced him of the difficulty of redeeming his pledges. Goulburn had placed the expenditure of 1830 at 47,810,000*l.* Althorp was only able to reduce the expenditure of 1831 to 46,850,000*l.*[5] The reductions effected by the Wellington Administration in the preceding year had been so complete that Althorp was unable to

[1] *Hansard*, vol. xxiv. p. 579.
[2] Spencer, p. 267.
[3] *Hansard*, vol. i. p. 797.
[4] Ibid., p. 933.
[5] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 405.

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do more than save another million. The available income of the year was placed at 47,150,000*l.*, or at 200,000*l.* more than the probable expenditure. With such a balance-sheet an ordinary Chancellor of the Exchequer would probably have done nothing. But, if nothing had been done by Althorp, all his promises of economical reform would have been laughed at, and the country would have been disappointed at the failure. Instead of doing nothing Althorp proposed the boldest Budget which had been brought forward since the days of Pitt. He determined to repeal the taxes on sea-borne coals, on tallow candles, on printed calicoes, on glass, the auction duty on the sale of land, and various other duties which were burdensome to the public without producing much profit to the nation, and to reduce the duty on tobacco and the tax on newspapers by one-half. He estimated that these reductions would involve a net loss to the Exchequer of 3,170,000*l.* a year. This loss he proposed to supply by a tax of ten shillings per cent. on the transfer of all real or funded property; by reducing some of the inequalities in the timber and wine duties, and in the duties on the export of coal, and by imposing new taxation on raw cotton and steamboats. These alterations in old duties and new taxes, he estimated, would produce 2,740,000*l.* a year.[1]

The Budget was an ambitious one. The speech in which it was explained was received with enthusiasm; and Althorp's friends imagined that the cheering which

[1] The following was the estimated loss on the taxes which were reduced:—

	£
Tobacco	800,000
Newspapers, &c.	100,000
Coals and Slate	830,000
Candles	200,000
Cottons	500,000
Glass	600,000
Auctions and Miscellaneous	140,000
Total	£3,170,000

—*Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 413.

every fresh proposal elicited pointed to the success of the scheme. Althorp, however, had hardly sat down before Goulburn rose to denounce the proposed tax on transfers. The National Debt, he argued, had been created on the express stipulation that the Stock should be free from any tax or imposition whatever, and the new tax would violate the contract between the individuals who had advanced, and the State who had borrowed, their money. Later on in the evening Peel used similar language; while Sugden, warming with the discussion, declared that the proposition 'involved as gross a violation of public faith as had ever been permitted by any revolutionary Government.' The dissatisfaction which was thus loudly expressed in the House was succeeded the next morning by a perfect uproar in the City. The Cabinet, alarmed at the storm which the proposal had excited, hastily met, and decided on its withdrawal. Its withdrawal was almost immediately announced in both Houses.[1]

The tax on transfers.

Althorp had experienced the satisfaction of proposing an ambitious Budget and the mortification of meeting with almost universal condemnation. But his humiliation was not complete. The loss of the 1,200,000*l.* which he had

The following were the taxes imposed or modified:—

	Old rate of Duty.	New Rate.	Gain to Exchequer.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	£
Wine, French	7 3	5 6	240,000
„ Foreign	4 10		
„ Cape	2 3		
Timber, European	55 0	20 0	600,000
„ Canadian	10 0		
Coals, Export, large	17 6	10 0	100,000
„ „ small	4 6		
Transfers		10*s.* per cent.	1,200,000
Steamboats		1*s.* per 20 miles per passenger	100,000
Cotton		1*d.* per lb.	500,000
Total			£2,740,000

—*Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 417.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ii. pp. 419, 443, 455, 471, 491. Spencer, p. 283.

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hoped to derive from the proposed tax on transfers, compelled him to modify his other suggestions, and to retain the duties on tobacco and glass as he found them. This concession, however, did not satisfy an Opposition flushed with the excitement of an important victory. They denounced the tax on steamboat passengers as an unnecessary burden on the poorer classes of travellers.[1] They declared that the alteration of the wine duties was a violation of the Methuen Treaty with Portugal;[2] and they assailed the proposed alteration of the timber duties as an injustice to Canada. 'Timber' became the watchword of the Protectionists, and all the influence which they possessed was exerted to defeat the proposal of the minister. The Protectionists were so formidable that Althorp again found it necessary to give way, and to content himself with proposing a smaller and more gradual reduction in the duties on European timber, and to refrain from increasing the rates on Canadian timber. This concession, however, failed to satisfy the Protectionists. Althorp's modified proposal was rejected on the 18th of March by 236 votes to 190; and the timber duties were accordingly left undisturbed.[3]

The timber duties.

There was no doubt that the results of the Budget had seriously damaged Althorp's reputation. There was equally no doubt that the position of the Government had become much more critical. The Opposition had shown its strength; and its strength had been displayed at a momentous period. The Reform Bill was already before the House; and many of the members who had voted against the timber duties had probably been animated by a desire to embarrass a Government which had committed itself to a large measure of Reform. But the question, from which they thus desired to free themselves, saved the Government from the humiliation which its defeat on the timber duties would otherwise have occa-

The Reform Bill.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 643. [2] Ibid., p. 745. [3] Ibid., vol. iii. p. 576.

sioned it. The failure of the Whig Budget was forgotten amidst the enthusiasm which the Whig Reform Bill everywhere excited. Petty questions, like taxes on transfers and on timber, failed to attract attention or to excite interest among men engaged in discussing the reconstruction of a Legislature.

Parliamentary Reform had been promised by the Government. But Parliamentary Reform was an elastic expression susceptible of almost any interpretation. The Chartists, who desired the ballot, manhood suffrage, and annual Parliaments, professed themselves Reformers; moderate men, who would have been satisfied with the disfranchisement of two or three rotten boroughs, and the concurrent enfranchisement of two or three populous towns, claimed also to be Reformers. Even in the Grey Cabinet the widest differences of opinion existed. Brougham objected to the disfranchisement of the close boroughs;[1] Grey was in favour of it. Brougham desired household suffrage; the Cabinet inclined to a 20*l.* qualification. Durham was in favour of the ballot; Grey of quinquennial Parliaments; Graham of enfranchising the suburbs of the metropolis; Palmerston and Melbourne of the minimum of change. Puzzled by these differences of opinion, the Cabinet decided on appointing a small committee of four members to inquire into and report upon the subject. Two members of the Cabinet, Graham and Durham, were placed upon the committee. Lord J. Russell and Lord Duncannon were associated with them upon it. Duncannon, who soon afterwards became First Commissioner of Land Revenue, was the eldest son of the Earl of Bessborough. He was an old schoolfellow of Althorp's; he had for many years been a member of Parliament, and for the greater part of that period he had acted as 'whipper-in' to the

[1] *Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV.*, vol. i. p. 81, note; and cf. Brougham, vol. iii. p. 92.

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Opposition.[1] His experience in that capacity had naturally given him a very intimate acquaintance with the feelings of the House, and with the wishes of the Whig members. His presence on the committee from these circumstances became useful and desirable.

The Reform Committee.

The committee, which was thus appointed, agreed upon a remarkable report. They proposed the disfranchisement of all boroughs with less than 2,000 inhabitants; the semi-disfranchisement of all boroughs with less than 4,000 inhabitants; the extension of the elective franchise to all 20*l.* householders in boroughs; the enfranchisement of 50*l.* leaseholders and 10*l.* copyholders in counties; and the grant of members to all populous towns with 10,000 inhabitants, and of additional members to all counties with 150,000 inhabitants. In addition to these recommendations they proposed the enforcement of residence, the registration of votes, the adoption of the ballot, an increase in the number of polling booths, the shortening of the duration of the poll, the taking the poll in the hundreds or divisions of counties, and the limit of the duration of each Parliament to five years.[2] Grey at once objected to that part of the proposed scheme which contemplated the adoption of the ballot; and the ballot was in consequence rejected. Its rejection smoothed the way or the king's reception of the measure. Nothing would have induced him to consent to the ballot; the report, without the ballot, received his deliberate approval.[3] The majority of the Cabinet agreed with the king; but they decided on making one other alteration in the recommendations

[1] Spencer, p. 48.

[2] *Earl Grey and William IV.*, vol. i. p. 461.

[3] The letter, in which the king approved the measure, is highly creditable to him as a Constitutional monarch. (*Earl Grey and William IV.*, vol. i. pp. 94–104.) It is perhaps the first of the many remarkable letters in the king's correspondence with Lord Grey, which show how far better William IV. understood his position than either his father or his brother.

of the committee. A 20*l.* household franchise in boroughs, it was found, would act as a measure of exclusion, as in many boroughs there were not even ten persons rated to a 20*l.* house. The Cabinet, in consequence, decided on making a 10*l.* instead of a 20*l.* house the qualification for the borough franchise.

Their report approved by the Cabinet and the king.

These principles, adopted by the Cabinet and approved by the king, formed the basis of the first Reform Bill of the Whig Ministry. It was found that there were sixty boroughs, returning 119 members, which had less than 2,000 inhabitants at the date of the last census; and that there were forty-six other boroughs with less than 4,000 inhabitants at the same date. The disfranchisement of the sixty boroughs in the first category, the semi-disfranchisement of the forty-six boroughs in the second category, and the semi-disfranchisement of Weymouth, which had previously returned four members, placed 167 seats at the disposal of the Ministry. It was proposed to give five additional members to Scotland, five to Ireland, one to Wales; and to add fifty-five members to the English counties, and forty-four members to the great unrepresented towns. It was proposed that every person in a Scotch county possessing a beneficial interest in lands or houses, either as a freeholder or a copyholder, to the amount of 10*l.*, or as a leaseholder to the amount of 50*l.*, should be entitled to a vote; and that the borough franchise in Scotland should be assimilated to that of England. It was not proposed to interfere with the county representation in Ireland, but to give a vote to every person residing in an Irish borough occupying a 10*l.* tenement.

The Reform Bill entrusted to Lord J. Russell.

Such were the leading provisions of the first Reform Bill. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been natural to have entrusted it to the leader of the House of Commons. But the Cabinet decided that it should be introduced by Lord John Russell, the Paymaster of the

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Forces. Various reasons induced them to arrive at this decision. Lord John had for more than ten years actively promoted the Reform of Parliament. A bill which was brought forward on his responsibility was, therefore, sure of favourable consideration from the Reformers. Lord John, moreover, was a younger brother of the Duke of Bedford; the duke was one of the largest territorial magnates in the country; he was the proprietor of rotten boroughs; and a bill, therefore, recommended by his brother's authority was likely to reassure timid or wavering politicians.[1] Something was, indeed, necessary to infuse spirit into the hearts of the Reformers in Parliament. Outside the House a crowd of people, anxiously collected throughout the greater portion of the day, testified their anxiety for the success of the measure which was about to be introduced. But, inside the House, Lord John was confronted by a compact body of Tories, anxious to learn what the Ministry were about to propose, but ready to forget their own differences in their dislike to all Reform. Those who had expected a great declamatory speech from the introducer of the measure were disappointed. Lord John told his tale in the plainest language. But the tale which he had to tell required no extraordinary eloquence to adorn it. The Radicals had not dared to expect, the Tories, in their wildest fears, had not apprehended, so complete a measure. Enthusiasm was visible on one side of the House; consternation and dismay on the other. At last, when Lord John read the list of boroughs which were doomed to extinction, the Tories hoped that the completeness of the measure would ensure its defeat. Forgetting their fears, they began to be amused, and burst into peals of derisive laughter.[2]

[1] Roebuck, vol. ii. p. 66—where, however, Mr. Roebuck hardly does justice to Lord J. Russell's earlier efforts.

[2] Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 106. Cf. Roebuck, vol. ii. p. 88. Spencer, pp. 299, 310; and Dalling's *Peel*, p. 88. Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 72. In the account of the bill I have followed the

Men of large experience believed that, if Peel had risen the moment Lord John sat down, and had declined to discuss a bill which was not a measure of 'Reform but of Revolution,' the House would have refused to allow the bill to be introduced. It is very unlikely, however, that such a result would have ensued. Tory members, like Sir Robert Inglis, had come down to the House primed with arguments to prove that little fishing villages in Cornwall were better qualified to return members than the great manufacturing towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Tory members, like Inglis, who had searched through Camden and Hatsell, Henry and Rapin, Hallam and Burke, who had telling quotations in their pockets from Horne Tooke's writings and Canning's speeches, would hardly have consented to waste all their labour by smothering the new-born infant in the very hour of its birth.[1] The House, instead of dividing, talked out the night and adjourned till the morrow. The debate, thus adjourned, was protracted over seven nights; but every fresh adjournment strengthened the hands of the Ministry and weakened those of the Opposition. The measure, which had excited derision in the House, was received with enthusiasm out of doors. Resolutions, supporting the bill, were passed at monster meetings in all the large towns. Moderate members, warned by the attitude of the country, declined to commit themselves to an uncompromising opposition to the measure; and the bill, which might possibly have been thrown out on the 1st of March, was read a first time without a division on the 9th.[2]

The first reading passed.

The Tories, however, had neither reconciled them-

bill itself, instead of the report of Lord John Russell's speech in *Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 1061, which differs from the bill in some slight details.

[1] Sir R. Inglis delivered, almost immediately after the introduction of the bill, a dull, learned, and elaborate argument, fortified by innumerable quotations from various authorities.—*Hansard*, vol. ii. p. 1090.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. iii. p. 317.

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selves to the bill nor withdrawn their opposition to it. The second reading was fixed for Monday, the 21st of March. On the preceding Friday the Government was defeated on the timber duties, and the thoroughness of the defeat raised the drooping spirits of the Opposition. The Ministry, indeed, hoped for a considerable majority upon the second reading; but, like prudent men, they desired to prepare for the consequences of defeat; and to obtain the king's permission, in that contingency, to dissolve Parliament. The king, however, shrank from the proposal to appeal to an excited population, and could not bring himself to face the consequences of a general election either in England or in Ireland. The Ministry failed to obtain the permission, which they again and again urged him to give them.[1] Happily, however, dissolution at that stage did not become necessary. After two nights' debate the bill was read a second time by 302 votes to 301, or by a narrow majority of one. The pressure of public opinion had thus defeated the united efforts of all the boroughmongers. The representatives of great constituencies, like Sir Thomas Acland, the member for Devonshire, and Mr. Wilson Patten, who had lately been returned for Lancashire, felt the full force of the popular movement, and voted for the bill. Even Charles Wynn, who had been frightened by the immensity of the scheme into resigning his office in the Ministry,[2] silently supported it; and the necessity for the dissolution was for the moment avoided.[3]

The second reading carried.

The second reading had been carried; but nothing could be more critical than the situation of the Ministry. The majority by which the bill had been read a second time was so small that the Ministry could hardly hope to carry the measure through its later stages. Prudent men

[1] Correspondence of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. i. pp. 158, 159, 176, 179.

[2] Ibid., p. 151.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. iii. p. 804.

like Greville, who disliked Reform, but dreaded the alternative of a popular commotion, hoped that the bill might be silently rejected by an adverse division in committee.[1] The bill, however, was not destined to survive to this stage. Gascoyne, the member for Liverpool, proposed a preliminary resolution, that the number of representatives in England and Wales should not be diminished. It was obvious that the whole strength of the Tory party would rally in Gascoyne's support; and the Ministry accordingly decided to meet the motion by a concession on their own part. Five boroughs were taken out of Schedule A and transferred to Schedule B. Seven boroughs were taken out of Schedule B.[2] Eight counties and seven large towns were given an additional member; and additional members were awarded to Ireland and to one other large town. But these concessions did not conciliate the Opposition. Gascoyne's motion was only a pretext for defeating the bill; and the slight alteration which the Ministry had made in its details did not affect a single vote. Men like Sir Thomas Acland, Mr. Wilson Patten, and Charles Wynn, who had supported the Government on the second reading, ventured on opposing it; and the Ministry was accordingly defeated by 299 votes to 291.[3]

Gascoyne's motion on going into committee.

This division, which took place on the 19th of April, proved fatal to the Reform Bill and to the Parliament of 1830. The Cabinet, on the following morning, decided on recommending a dissolution. The king, after four-and-twenty hours' consideration, gave his consent to it.[4] The ministers at once announced that the bill would not be proceeded with, and endeavoured to go on with the ordinary business of the evening. The Opposition, how-

The dissolution of 1831.

[1] Greville, vol. ii. p. 132.

[2] Schedule A contained the names of the boroughs to be wholly disfranchised; Schedule B the names of those to be semi-disfranchised.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. iii. 1688.

[4] Correspondence of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. i. pp. 225, 232.

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ever, declined to enter into the discussion of the Estimates, which happened to be before the House, and raised a confused and desultory debate on Reform. The night wore away; supply had not been granted; and the Opposition, showing no signs of concession, moved the adjournment of the debate. The motion was met with all the resistance which ministers could offer to it; but the defeat of the previous evening had lessened their influence. They were beaten by 164 votes to 142; and the adjournment was consequently carried.[1]

The division was disastrous to the Tories. It hastened the dissolution which under any circumstances would have taken place. Before the debate was closed Althorp sent word to Grey that the supplies could not be obtained, and that, in his opinion, the dissolution ought to take place at once. Grey happened to be dining, with several other members of the Cabinet, with his son-in-law, Durham. A council was immediately held, at which it was decided to act on Althorp's advice. A messenger was at once sent to the king; and the king, on the same evening, approved the dissolution. Orders were, accordingly, given to the Clerk of the Council directing him the next day to bring to the palace the papers which are required when Parliament is to be dissolved by commission. But, on the following morning, the Cabinet discovered that this arrangement would not be satisfactory. Lord Wharncliffe had given notice of a motion for an address to the Crown against a dissolution. The Opposition Peers had made up their minds to carry this address; and the Ministry were equally desirous to prevent its adoption. If Parliament, however, were prorogued by commission the adoption of the address could not be prevented. Before admitting the Commissioners the House of Lords was entitled to dispose of the business before it; and the Opposition Peers could not, therefore, be

[1] *Hansard*, vol. iii. pp. 1765, 1805.

stopped, unless the king himself consented to dissolve Parliament in person. Fortunately for the Ministry, the king's consent was easily procured. However much he had originally disliked the proposal for a dissolution, he disliked much more the attempt which was to be made in the House of Lords to interfere with his prerogative to dissolve. He declared that he would go himself at once; that if his carriages could not be got ready he would go in a hackney coach. Trumpery difficulties, raised by some of his household, about preparing the state carriages and plaiting the horses' manes, might have proved impassable mountains in the reign of George—they were only molehills in the reign of William.[1]

The scene in the Lords.

On the afternoon on which the dissolution took place the House of Lords met at two, the House of Commons at half-past two. The impending dissolution had just become known, and both Houses were the scene of disorder and confusion rarely witnessed in Parliament. In the House of Commons the violence was sufficiently marked. In the House of Lords the Peers were nearly coming to blows. Wharncliffe had barely time to read his motion before his speech was stopped by shouts of 'The king!' Brougham increased the uproar by angrily declaring that the House of Commons had thought fit to take the extreme and unprecedented step of refusing the supplies. The complaint only increased the anger of the Tories. Brougham was hooted. Lord Londonderry shook his fist at the Duke of Richmond. The Peeresses who

[1] The true account of this will be found in the correspondence between Earl Grey and William IV., vol. i. pp. 234–236, note. It is only necessary to relate it here because Brougham makes himself the hero of a very inaccurate account (*Memoirs*, vol. iii. pp. 113–116), which he apparently communicated to Mr. Roebuck (*Hist. of Whig Ministry*, vol. ii. p. 149), and certainly communicated to Mr. Molesworth (*Hist. of Reform Bill*, p. 186; and preface to 2nd edition, p. 8). Mr. Roebuck's story is copied by Alison, *more suo*, by the page, vol. iv. pp. 330–332. Miss Martineau has a much shorter and more accurate account in her *History of the Thirty Years' Peace*, vol. ii. p. 35. She had the great advantage of deriving no assistance from Brougham.

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had come to look at the king trembled in the gallery. The king himself, alarmed at the uproar, hesitated for a moment to enter the House. Brougham, however, easily persuaded him that the indecorous uproar would be hushed by his presence. He came; and told his turbulent legislators that he had come to prorogue the Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution.[1]

The illumination of the metropolis, and the enthusiasm of the country.

The consternation of the Opposition at the sudden dissolution of the Parliament of 1830 was exceeded by the enthusiasm which was created by the news of it in the country. London was illuminated; Tory Peers had their windows broken by the mob; and even the great services of Wellington did not protect Apsley House from damage. Everyone was required to illuminate, and duke or citizen who failed to manifest his participation in the universal elation[2] had to pay the penalty for his indifference to the general rejoicing. The illumination of the streets of London was, however, only one symptom of the general excitement. From John-o'-Groat's to the Land's End a cry was raised of 'The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill.' Printed lists were circulated stating the manner in which each member had voted on Gascoyne's motion. Everyone who had directly or indirectly opposed Reform incurred the full animosity of the populace. Gascoyne himself was defeated at Liverpool; Sir Robert Wilson, an ardent Reformer on most points, lost his seat at Southwark for having supported Gascoyne. County members like Vyvyan, the member for Cornwall; Knatchbull, the member for Kent; and

[1] *Hansard*, vol. iii. p. 1807. Greville, vol. ii. p. 137. Melbourne, vol. i. p. 369. Brougham, vol. iii. p. 118.

[2] The illumination took place on the 27th of April. Two days before, or on the 25th of April, the Duchess of Wellington died. Her dead body was lying in Apsley House on the evening of the illumination. The mob, when they learned the fact from the police, moved away from Apsley House without committing further damage.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 69. Lord Londonderry—Greville irreverently calls him 'that ass, Lord Londonderry'—had his windows left unmended for months. —*Greville*, vol. ii. p. 180.

Bankes, the member for Dorsetshire, were replaced by Reformers. Even the influence of the boroughmongers was lost in the crisis. For the first time the Duke of Newcastle found himself unable to do what he liked with his own. His candidates were defeated at Newark, at Bassetlaw, and in Nottinghamshire. Lord Lonsdale proved almost equally powerless in Cumberland. The mighty force of popular opinion, bursting the bonds by which it had been controlled, swept political power out of the hands of the borough-owners and transferred it to the people.

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The general election which thus took place in the summer of 1831 in reality completed the triumph of the Reformers. The Legislature had still to register the verdict of the country; but it had not the slightest chance of reversing it. A long succession of causes had been slowly preparing the passage of the Reform Bill; and all the efforts of all the Tory Governments had been powerless to prevent it. During the continuance of the Great War, indeed, the people, frightened by the excesses of French republicans and dazzled by the achievements of their own arms, had, for a moment, forgotten their grievances. But during the whole of the period the reasons for Reform were continually acquiring greater significance. The population, moving towards the coalfields, were creating a new England in the Northern counties; while the little agricultural towns and fishing villages of the South were stagnating in a stationary and inelastic torpor. In consequence, on the return of peace, the demand for Reform was raised with a louder voice than ever. Foolish statesmen, relying on the reputation which military success had secured them, attempted to stifle the cry of the people by repressive laws and wholesale prosecutions. They succeeded, for the moment, in quelling the agitation, and had the folly to imagine that they had stopped the rising of the tide. While they were congratulating themselves

The strength of the popular demand.

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on their success the tide was still rising. The force of the waters was occasionally diverted into new channels; but the tide never ceased to rise. It helped to sweep autocracy from the Spanish colonies; it helped to drive the Turks from Greece; it washed away the religious disabilities invented in the seventeenth century; it made a breach in the Protective system which previous generations had established. The accumulating waters, pouring into such channels as these, ceased for the moment to threaten the citadel—the boasted Constitution in which a handful of politicians had entrenched themselves. But the waters had not ceased to rise; they had only been diverted into new inlets. These inlets filled, the waters rose again. They washed away the rampart in which the Tories had made their stand. It was in vain that the governing classes attempted to repair the breach, which was continually increasing. A child might as well hope to arrest the tide with its sand-castle. The rising waters sweep away the little mound of shifting sand. The force of a mighty nation swept away the foolish legislators who fancied that they had power to control it.

The attitude of the Tories.

Yet these truths were not recognised by Tories and Protectionists, though their outworks had already crumbled beneath their feet. They were unable to realise the silent revolution which had been effected in their own time. They were unwilling to admit that the course of events, which the Legislature had previously controlled, was in future to control the Legislature. It was true that in one House of Parliament the Reformers had already secured a majority which it was hopeless to withstand, and that the utmost that the Tories could expect was to delay the passage of a measure which they had no longer the power to defeat. What then? The House of Commons, in the opinion of statesmen nursed in the traditions of a past age which was already fading from their view, was only one of the three estates of the realm. The Lords

spiritual and temporal had, in theory, as much power as the representatives of the people. The Peers might, at any rate, be trusted to resist to the last a measure which would diminish their power and possibly interfere with their privileges. A cause which was lost in the Commons might, therefore, be recovered in the Lords; and borough-owners and landlords might still save the privileges which were being washed from under their feet. Clinging thus tenaciously to the traditions of the past, Tory statesmen failed to read the signs of the times or to appreciate the force of the rising waters. They thought that their force might be stayed by the legislative machinery which their ancestors had devised. They thought that a handful of Peers might hold a breach through which a nation was swarming.

The introduction of the second Reform Bill.

It was the distinguishing merit of the Whig minister of 1830 that he had realised the necessity for Reform a whole generation before the demand for it became irresistible. He was not likely, therefore, to misunderstand the signs of the times in which he was living. The new Parliament was formally opened on the 21st of June. Three days afterwards, or on the 24th of June, Lord J. Russell introduced the second Reform Bill. But his position had been materially altered since he had been entrusted with the original bill, nearly four months before. His services had been properly rewarded by his admission to the Cabinet.[1] His courage had been proportionately raised by the enthusiasm and strength of his supporters. He no longer spoke with the hesitation and diffidence which had marked his introduction of the original Reform Bill. But he had no concessions to offer. The country had demanded the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill; and the Ministry had decided on the reintroduction of the bill without material amendment. Fifty-four

[1] He and Stanley were both promoted to the Cabinet immediately before the opening of the session.—*Greville*, vol. ii. p. 150.

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boroughs had been doomed to disfranchisement, forty-four boroughs to semi-disfranchisement, in the latest edition of the original bill. The new bill proposed the disfranchisement of fifty-seven boroughs and the semi-disfranchisement of forty others.[1] Both bills, therefore, contemplated the same measure of disfranchisement. Both bills proposed the enfranchisement of the same great towns. The Ministry, had, therefore, adhered to all the salient features of their original plan. The Opposition were no longer capable, however, of maintaining their previous tactics. In March the motion for the introduction of the bill had been carried only after seven nights' debate; the second reading had been carried after two nights' debate by a majority of only one. In June leave for the introduction of the bill was granted after one night's discussion, and the second reading was carried on the morning of the 8th of July by a majority of 136.[2]

The majority was so large, the enthusiasm of the House of Commons was so great, that the Ministry might fairly hope for the rapid passage of the measure through its future stages. The Opposition, however, exhausted the forms of Parliament to delay a proposal which it was no longer doubtful that they were unable to defeat. On the 12th of July Lord John Russell moved that the House should go into committee upon the bill. The committee lasted for forty nights, and did not conclude its labours till the 7th of September.[3] No material alterations in the measure were effected by the committee. The old borough of Saltash[4] was transferred from Schedule A to Schedule B. Ashton and Stroud were each given a

[1] Downton and St. Germains were transferred from Schedule B to Schedule A. Penryn and Sandwich were taken out of Schedule B.

[2] The numbers are given in *Hansard*, vol. iv. p. 906, as 367 to 231. In the analysis of the division, however, only 230 names are printed in the minority. In the summary at the end of it the minority is credited with 232 (p. 919).

[3] *Hansard*, vol. vi. p. 1228.

[4] The old adage runs:—

'Saltash was a borough town
When Plymouth was a breezy down.'

member; two Welsh counties, Carmarthen and Denbigh, an additional member each; and the right of voting was extended, on the motion of Lord Chandos, to 50*l.* occupiers in counties.[1] These slight alterations hardly rewarded the Opposition for the persistent labours in which they had been engaged. Night after night had been wasted with an objectless discussion, which only irritated the country and wearied the Government. On the first of the forty nights motions for adjournment were again and again repeated, and the Opposition did not finally give way till eight o'clock on the following morning. Happily for the comfort of the Legislature, the example, which was thus set by an irritated minority, was not followed for another forty-six years.[2]

The impatience of the country.

Delay was hardly tolerated within the walls of Parliament. Outside the walls of Parliament the country watched with ill-disguised impatience the tactics of the Opposition. They could not understand why the discussion of a measure which was acceptable to a large majority of the House of Commons, and to nine men out of every ten in the country, should be protracted over forty nights. At the commencement of August the Birmingham Political Union marked its sense of the delays by petitioning the House to accelerate the progress of the bill. The House declined to accept the petition which complained of 'a factious and puerile opposition' by 'a small and interested minority.'[3] But the petition, though it was rejected, did its work. The committee steadily applied itself to the details of the measure. A proposal, made by Hunt, for the enfranchisement of all ratepayers, was defeated by a majority of 123 votes to 1; a sugges-

[1] The 'Chandos clause' really originated with Colonel Sibthorp; and Sibthorp bitterly complained of Chandos anticipating him.'—*Hansard*, vol. vi. p. 283.

[2] Peel, to his credit, went home to bed at an early hour, and the contest was maintained by a small and dwindling body of old Tories, headed by Sir C. Wetherell.—*Spencer*, p. 333.

[3] *Hansard*, vol. v. p. 589.

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tion by Hume, for the representation of the colonies, was rejected without a division.[1] On the 7th of September the bill was reported; on the 13th the report was considered.[2] On the 19th the bill was read a third time without discussion; and finally on the 21st of September it was passed, after three nights' debate, by 345 votes to 236.[3]

The coronation.

The discussion on the bill, after its passage through the committee, had been temporarily interrupted by the coronation of the king and queen. The king, who hated display, had desired to dispense with the ceremony; and the Ministry, bent on economy, had zealously endeavoured to promote his wishes. The Tories, however, would not tolerate the omission of a ceremonial to which they attached almost as much importance as to the preservation of rotten boroughs; and king and ministers were consequently both compelled to give way. The king, however, endeavoured to simplify the proceedings; he objected to being separately kissed by each Peer; and thought that the senior member of each rank of the Peerage might act as proxy for his brethren. The Ministry considered that they might save the public some expense, and the monarch some fatigue, by dispensing with the Peeresses' procession. Such great innovations were not tolerated by noble lords intent on preserving their privileges. The Peeresses were allowed to display their dresses; the king was forced to submit to the customary kisses of his Peers; and the wrath of the Peerage was appeased by these timely concessions.[4]

The concessions, however, did not alter the determination of the Ministry to avoid the reckless extravagance which had characterised the coronation of George IV. On that occasion 240,000*l.* had been expended; and the

[1] *Hansard*, vol. vi. pp. 143, 558.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1228, 1388.
[3] Ibid., vol. vii. pp. 141, 464.
[4] Ibid., vol. v. p. 1167; vol. vi. pp. 208, 365. *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 153; and cf. Greville, vol. ii. p. 185.

expenditure had hardly had a redeeming quality about it. The extravagance of the ceremony had been only equalled by the meanness and folly of the principal actors in it. Even the Dean and Chapter of Westminster had cut down some fine old trees in Palace Yard in order that they might be able to make an additional 10*l.* by the erection of some scaffolding.[1] The king had appeared in hired jewels, and his neglect to return them had saddled the country with an expense of thousands of pounds. The robes which he had worn on the occasion had been put away and forgotten, and ultimately sold, by his executors' orders, at the commencement of his successor's reign. His kid trowsers, lined with white satin, were knocked down for a dozen shillings; and the crimson mantle, which had cost him 500*l.*, was disposed of for 47 guineas.[2] The reckless profusion which had characterised the conduct of George IV. appeared in a new light when his wardrobe was disposed of by public auction for a tithe of its value; and the Ministry was accordingly supported in its determination to resist the repetition of unnecessary waste.

The ceremony, shorn of some of its previous proportions, took place on the 8th of September; and proved that a fine display could be secured without profuse extravagance. The weather was magnificent, the procession splendid, the people enthusiastic, the Abbey gay with the uniforms of the men and the dresses of the women. The Peeresses had the satisfaction of exhibiting their jewelry; and Peers, spiritual and temporal, were permitted to salute his Majesty in person. But with the conclusion of the ceremony in church the public pageant terminated. The gorgeous banquet, which had been a peculiar feature in the coronation of George IV., was omitted from the coronation of his successor; and the great men of the

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, vol. viii. p. 1127.

[2] *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 81.

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day had to satisfy themselves with dining at the expense of the king in his palace, or of his ministers in their houses, instead of being feasted at the public cost in Westminster Hall. But this omission did not detract from the splendour of the pageant. Those who had grumbled most at the retrenchments of the ministers were forced to admit that their economies had been justified; and the asperities of political warfare were smoothed by the interposition of a ceremony in which Whigs and Tories had held a common share.

The Reform Bill in the Lords.

The satisfaction which the coronation had given probably facilitated the progress of the Reform Bill through its later stages in the House of Commons. But the recollection of the gay scene was effaced before the bill reached the House of Lords, on the 22nd of September. The formal proceedings which are customary when a bill is carried from one House to the other were, on this occasion, watched with breathless anxiety; and the Commons, instead of retiring from the Bar, waited till the second reading of the bill had been fixed for Monday, the 3rd of October.[1] The debate which commenced on that day was one of the most memorable which had ever occurred in the House of Lords. It was opened by a minister who was able to avow that he stood before their lordships 'the advocate of principles from which' he had 'never swerved,'[2] and that he was only proposing in his old age the measure which he had promoted in his youth. Grey's commanding eloquence had never been exerted with more effect than in this debate. Chancellor and ex-Chancellor vied with each other, towards the close of it, in speeches of unusual power. Brougham actually supplicated his brother Peers on his knees to pass the bill.[3] Consummate actor that he was, he made the common mistake of overacting his part, and became ridiculous when he intended to be sublime. His friends,

[1] *Hansard*, vol. vii. p. 479. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 930. [3] *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 275.

'alarmed lest he should be suffering from the effects of the mulled port,' which he had 'copiously imbibed' towards the conclusion of his long speech, 'picked him up and placed him safely on the woolsack.'[1] Lyndhurst, in a speech of marked ability, replied to Brougham's declamation; and, after a few desultory speeches from dukes and prelates, and an eloquent reply from Grey, the Peers rejected the second reading of the measure by 199 votes to 158.[2]

The bill defeated.

The memorable division took place about six o'clock in the morning on Saturday, the 8th of October. The newspapers, a few hours afterwards, announced it to the discontented capital. The 'Chronicle' and the 'Sun' appeared in mourning. The 'Times,' in its short leading article, declared that it turned from 'the appalling sight of a wounded nation to the means already in action for recovery.' The means were sufficiently formidable. The Common Council of the City at once met in support of the measure. Those members of the House of Commons who had supported the bill passed a vote of confidence in the Government. London, however, appeared apathetic when its action was contrasted with that of the country. The news of the division reached Birmingham at five o'clock in the afternoon. The bells were immediately muffled and tolled. The mob at Derby, irritated at the announcement, broke out into open riot. The gaol at Nottingham was burned down. Two troops of Kentish Yeomanry tendered their resignations because their commanding officers, Lord Sydney and Lord Winchilsea, had voted against the bill; and meetings were held in almost every county to support the Government.[3]

The indignation of the country.

There was, however, one satisfaction for the Reformers.

[1] Campbell's *Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 398.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 339.

[3] See the files of the *Times*, *Chronicle*, and other papers for 8th, 10th, and 11th of October, 1831. *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 161.

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The 'Chronicle' had assured them, in its black-edged columns, that 'the triumph of the wicked does not endure for ever,' and the triumph of the Opposition promised to be equally shortlived. The House of Commons had hardly reassembled on the Monday before Lord Ebrington proposed a resolution lamenting the fate of the Reform Bill, and expressing unabated confidence in the Ministry. The motion was resisted by Goulburn on the part of the Opposition. But neither Ebrington nor Goulburn succeeded in instilling any enthusiasm into the House. Among the more recent additions to the House of Commons, however, there was a young orator whose eloquence was equal to his ardour, and whose ardour was stimulated by his knowledge. Thomas Babington Macaulay was born in 1800. He entered Parliament for Lord Lansdowne's borough of Calne in February 1830. He only spoke twice during the memorable session which was abruptly concluded by the death of George IV. He had done nothing which gave him any right to expect office in Lord Grey's Ministry; and when the Whig Administration was formed his claims were overlooked. Yet the introduction of the Reform Bill raised him, at once, to eminence. His first speech on the second reading of the first bill reminded the older members who heard it of the days of Fox, of Pitt, and of Canning. His next speech, on the second reading of the second bill, confirmed the great impression which his first speech had made. He rose after Goulburn to support Ebrington's motion. Goulburn had endeavoured to limit the debate to a discussion of the measures of the Government—the timber duties, the coal duties, the sugar duties. Macaulay brushed away the cobwebs which Goulburn had woven as mere trifling, and recalled the House to the one subject which was before it: 'At the present moment I can see only one question in the State—the question of Reform; only two parties—the friends of the bill and its enemies.

Lord Ebrington's resolution.

Macaulay's speech.

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. . . The public enthusiasm is undiminished. Old Sarum has grown no bigger, Manchester has grown no smaller. . . . I know only two ways in which societies can be governed—by public opinion and by the sword. A Government having at its command the armies, the fleets, and the revenues of Great Britain might possibly hold Ireland by the sword. So Oliver Cromwell held Ireland; so William the Third held it; so Mr. Pitt held it; so the Duke of Wellington might perhaps have held it. But to govern Great Britain by the sword—so wild a thought has never, I will venture to say, occurred to any public man of any party. But, if not by the sword, how is the country to be governed? . . . In old times, when the villeins were driven to revolt by oppression, when a hundred thousand insurgents appeared in arms on Blackheath, the king rode up to them and exclaimed, "I will be your leader!" and at once the infuriated multitude laid down their arms and dispersed at his command. Herein let us imitate him. Let us say,' to our countrymen, '"We are your leaders. Our lawful power shall be firmly exerted to the utmost in your cause; and our lawful power is such that it must finally prevail."'[1]

The prorogation.

Macaulay's speech had the merit of concentrating the attention of his audience on the main issue. The House, aroused by it into enthusiasm, passed Ebrington's resolution by a large majority,[2] and the Ministry were thus supported in the determination, which they had already formed, to persevere in the measure which had been unfortunately rejected for a time.[3] With this view they obtained the king's assent to a short prorogation of Parliament, and to the reintroduction of the Reform Bill, with such amendments as might be necessary, after the conclusion of the recess. The country was partly pacified

[1] *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 395, 399.

[2] By 329 votes to 198 (*Hansard*, vol. viii. p. 465).

[3] Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. i. p. 375, note; and cf. Spencer, p. 360.

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by the assurance that the Ministry intended to persevere with the measure. But the Political Unions displayed an increasing determination to intimidate the Peers. A vast meeting, which was said to have consisted of 150,000 persons, was held at Birmingham; resolutions were passed at it that no taxes should be paid if the Reform Bill were rejected; and thanks were unanimously voted at it to Althorp and Lord John Russell. Althorp wrote to Attwood, the President of the Union, that 'the unanimous approbation of 150,000 of my fellow-countrymen is no trifling honour,' and went on to urge Attwood to use his influence with the members of the Union and prevail upon them to continue to pay their taxes. Lord John Russell, with much less tact, after acknowledging the compliment paid to him, went on to declare that it was 'impossible that the whisper of faction should prevail against the voice of a nation.' Hyperbole is always foolish. It was absurd to call a majority of the House of Lords a faction; it was still more absurd to speak of a vote which had defeated the Reform Bill as a whisper. But the extravagance of the expression was not its worst fault. The Opposition denounced the ministers who had expressed their satisfaction at being praised by a meeting pledged to resist the payment of taxes; and a new cause was added to the many causes which were producing the prevailing excitement.[1]

In the midst of this excitement, and the angry feelings which it generated, Parliament was prorogued. The Reformers, during the short recess, endeavoured to strengthen their position in the country. The mass meeting at Birmingham had taught them the advantage of organisation; and the Reformers in other places consequently endeavoured to imitate the example which had been set them by Attwood in the Midland counties. A

The Unions.

[1] *Hansard*, vol. viii. pp. 589–646. Spencer, p. 362. Greville, vol. ii. p. 206. *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Hist., p. 282.

meeting was held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in London, on the 31st of October, at which it was decided to form a National Political Union, with its head in the metropolis and affiliated societies in the provinces. The Union was to pledge itself to support the Government and to aid the Reform Bill; but its management soon passed into the hands of extreme men, indisposed to accept the comparatively moderate terms of the Ministerial measure. Burdett, 'overborne by his more violent associates,'[1] who were intent on obtaining universal suffrage, withdrew from the society; and the working classes, left to their own guidance, organised a monster meeting in the metropolis for the 7th of November. It was known that the members of the Union were providing themselves with staves and bludgeons; it was reported on high authority that a contract had been made for the supply of arms to them;[2] and both the king at Brighton and the upper classes in the metropolis were seriously alarmed at the prospect of riot and disorder. On the remonstrance of the magistrates, and at the advice of Melbourne, the organisers of the metropolitan meeting were induced to abandon their intention of holding it. But the alarm which its announcement had occasioned was so general that the Ministry felt compelled to interfere. A proclamation was issued on the 22nd of November declaring that 'associations composed of separate bodies, with various divisions and subdivisions, under leaders with a gradation of ranks and authority, were unconstitutional and illegal.' The proclamation did little good. The National Political Union declared that it did not come within the words of the proclamation. The Birmingham Political Union continued its proceedings. The English proved, as the Irish had shown four years before, that no Ministerial

[1] Spencer, p. 366, note.
[2] Grey's Corresp. with William IV., vol. i. p. 414.

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measures are capable of defeating the organisation of a determined people.[1]

Yet the condition of the country fully justified the general alarm. The news of the defeat of the Reform Bill had been everywhere followed by riot. Nottingham Castle had been burned down because it was the property of the Duke of Newcastle. The house of Mr. Musters, a Tory squire of the neighbourhood, had been burned to the ground; and his unfortunate wife, flying into the shrubbery, had died from the effects of her exposure to the cold on a raw October night. Lord Londonderry, riding through London, had been knocked off his horse by the mob and seriously injured. These things, however, formidable as they were, were only the prelude to the scenes of violence which were immediately to follow. No member of the House of Commons had been more persistent or plainspoken in his opposition to the Reform Bill than Wetherell, the hot-headed lawyer, who had been Attorney-General under Wellington. Throughout the long discussions in committee Wetherell had lost no opportunity for resisting the Government and for delaying the progress of the measure. On the 13th of October he moved an address to the Crown for a special commission for the trial of the rioters who had burned Nottingham Castle. The motion was rejected; but its proposal increased his unpopularity. It so happened that Wetherell was Recorder of Bristol. The duties of his office required his presence in that town at the end of October, and usage was in favour of his making a public entry into the city on the occasion. Some time before the date of the assize the sheriff and one of the aldermen of Bristol waited on him and told him that it would not be safe for him to make a public entry into the town without the protection of a larger force than the

Wetherell

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, *Hist.*, p. 296; *Chron.*, p. 170.

civil authorities had at their disposal. Wetherell sent his informants to the Home Office. Melbourne and his colleagues refused to take upon themselves the responsibility of stopping the assize, and it was consequently determined that everything should go on as usual.[1]

opens the assize at Bristol.

Wetherell made his entry into Bristol on Saturday, the 29th of October. His carriage was surrounded by constables and escorted by 300 or 400 mounted gentlemen. The mob increased in numbers as the vehicle proceeded through the streets. Wetherell was assailed with hisses and yells, while stones were occasionally thrown at him. Amidst disturbances of this character the Recorder reached the Guildhall. The mayor's clerk attempted to read the commission, but the uproar was so great that he could not make himself heard. The Court was, however, adjourned till the Monday morning; the Recorder retired from the bench; and the mob, cheering lustily for the king, withdrew into the street.

The Bristol riots.

In the meanwhile the mob had been collecting in continually increasing numbers around the Mansion House. The special constables sworn in to preserve order advanced to arrest some of the rioters who had made themselves conspicuous by throwing stones at the Recorder's carriage. Two persons were taken and removed in custody into the Mansion House. The mob, irritated at these arrests, displayed an increasing disposition to violence. They armed themselves with sticks; they engaged in desultory contests with the constables; and their numbers continually became greater. The special constables, without food or rest, grew wearied with their incessant exertions. At four o'clock in the afternoon a considerable portion of them were allowed to go away for refreshment. Their departure was the signal for greater activity among the rioters. It was in vain that the mayor

[1] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 59. Torrens, in his *Life of Melbourne*, has no oirginal information on the subject.

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came forward to warn the people of the consequences of their proceedings. It was in vain that the Riot Act was read. These measures only taught the mob their own power and the weakness of the authorities. The Mansion House was attacked. Doors and windows were smashed to pieces. The mob, entering the building, broke up the furniture and made preparations for firing the edifice. Happily for Wetherell, he succeeded in making his escape into other premises and in leaving the city. Happily, too, Colonel Brereton, with a body of cavalry, arrived on the scene. The troops were received with cheers by the people. They remained in the neighbourhood throughout the night. In the course of it they made one charge, in which one man was killed and several others were wounded. Passing and repassing through the streets, they effectually prevented the reassembly of the mob.

Soldiers, however, are only men. Man and horse required rest and refreshment; and, as the morning broke on the devoted city, Brereton withdrew his men from their duties. Their withdrawal was the immediate signal for the reassembly of the mob; the Mansion House was sacked; its contents thrown into the square; and the people, penetrating into the cellars, seized and drank the wine which was stored in them. Infuriated by the liquor, the mob was no longer satisfied with acting on the defensive. The cavalry reappeared, and were attacked by the crowd. Brereton, afraid of acting, withdrew his men. Their retreat was the signal for a new attack upon them. The soldiers fired in their own defence upon the mob. Brereton, dreading the responsibility cast upon him, promised the mob that there should be no more firing, and led the 14th Dragoons out of the city. The slender force at the disposal of the authorities was thus dangerously weakened at a most critical period.

A few soldiers belonging to the 3rd Dragoons were still drawn up before the Mansion House. The mob

showed no disposition to attack them. A party of the rioters, however, proceeded to the Bridewell, beat in the doors, liberated the prisoners, and set the building on fire. Gaining confidence with success, they turned to the new Gaol, released the prisoners, and fired the building. Another body of the rioters marched to the Bishop's Palace and attacked it. The news of the attack induced the authorities to withdraw the few troops who still held the mob in check at the Mansion House. The troops who were thus withdrawn were not able to save the Bishop's Palace from the flames. But their withdrawal was the signal for the firing of the Mansion House. Restless spirits, revelling in the work of destruction, wilfully set fire to the adjacent buildings; and, as the night wore on, the flames streamed up higher and higher into the heavens; while the crackle of the fire, mingling with the roar of the mob, made men fancy that they were gazing on a scene in the 'Inferno.'[1]

The authorities could no longer close their eyes to the character of the riot. A large portion of the city was in flames; and the lowest refuse of the population were extending the conflagration, and pillaging the houses which they successively fired. The magistrates, hastily meeting, decided on adopting extreme measures for the restoration of order. The *posse comitatus* was called out; the troops which had been withdrawn from the city were hastily recalled. Major Mackworth, the aide-de-camp to Lord Hill, placed himself at their head. The men were employed to clear the streets; and Mackworth ordered them to charge, and to charge home. This vigorous measure succeeded. The mob gave way before the soldiers when they found that their arms were to be used in earnest against them, and scattered in every direction. The conflagration which the rioters had kindled was gradually

[1] See Kingsley's account of this in his life, vol. i. p. 21. Kingsley was at school at Clifton at the time.

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extinguished. Some of the leading rioters were arrested by the military and the special constables, and order was restored. But the restoration of order could neither efface the recollection of the three days of riot nor restore the property which had been destroyed and the buildings which had been burned. A Special Commission, sent down to Bristol, condemned some of the people who had been most active in the riot to death. Brereton, brought before a court martial for misconduct, destroyed himself; and the whole nation shuddered at a story which reminded them too accurately of the disturbances which, their fathers had told them, Lord George Gordon's fanaticism had provoked; or which, more recently, had deluged the metropolis of France with the blood of its citizens.[1]

The cholera.

Riot at Bristol was succeeded by disturbance at other places. The whole country was agitated by the storm in politics; and the seething populace, daily acquiring fresh evidence of its own power, appeared ready to burst the bonds of discipline, and to spread ruin over the land. Property trembled at the power of the people; and the people, it so happened, were also trembling at another danger. News had reached England, during the previous year, that a new disease—a sort of plague—was raging in Russia. Russian vessels were placed under a precautionary quarantine, and little or nothing more was thought of the matter. In the course of 1831, however, accounts arrived of the serious ravages which the disease had made in Russia, and of its appearance at Riga, a Baltic port largely frequented by British shipping. The spread of the plague—the 'cholera,' as it was now called—seemed so serious that the king was advised to refer to its progress in the speech from the throne; and fresh measures of precaution were taken by the Government.[2]

[1] An account of the riots will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Hist., p. 291; and Chron., p. 171. The trials of the rioters in ibid., 1832, Chron., p. 2. Col. Brereton's suicide, ibid., p. 14.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. iv. p. 86. Greville, vol. ii. pp. 57, 150.

The position of the Government, however, in the matter was not an easy one. If it failed to take effectual precautions against the cholera, it laid itself open to the charge of indifference to the health of the people. If, on the contrary, it took them, it ran the risk of interfering with the operations of trade. The doctors, who cared nothing for commerce, naturally insisted on the adoption of every possible precaution. The Ministry, unable to feel equal indifference to trade, hesitated to adopt remedies which would have been ruinous to the commercial classes. A Board of Health was formed. But its formation only increased the alarm of the public. News reached England in June that Diebitsch, the hero of 1829, had died of the cholera. In July a report was brought that it had broken out at St. Petersburg. In September it appeared at Berlin; and in November a case occurred at Sunderland. In February 1832 it reached London; and, during the whole of that year, it broke out with more or less violence in different parts of the country. Upwards of 50,000 persons are said to have died of it.[1]

The causes which assisted its progress.

Disease increased the alarm which disturbance had excited. People were too frightened to reflect that both disease and disturbance were attributable to the plainest causes. The disturbances were undoubtedly due to the attempt of a minority to withstand the demands of the majority. The cholera was also attributable to causes which were equally plain. Always present in Asia, it had been brought into Europe by the Russian armies, which had come into contact with it in Armenia. It found in Europe many conditions for its extension. The disease is nourished by dirt, intensified by want, and becomes more deadly as it spreads; and unfortunately the disregard of every sanitary law was favourable for the

[1] For the estimate, see *Encycl. Brit.*, ad verb. 'Cholera.' Greville's *Diary*, vol. ii. pp. 156, 161, 193, 208, 240, 258, is the best record of the progress of the disease.

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spread of a plague of this character. In Sunderland, where it first appeared, there were houses with one hundred and fifty inmates, in the lowest state of poverty, huddled five and six in a bed. In Bethnal Green, where the disorder made great ravages, the population were in the most abject poverty; but the Local Board of Health, hastily summoned to battle with the disorder, met at a public-house, drank themselves drunk, and did nothing.[1]

The plague was nourished by dirt and want: it would have disappeared before cleanliness and plenty. Eighteen years afterwards, a learned dignitary of the Church had the good sense, during an outbreak of the same disease, to preach upon the text, 'Wash and be clean.' A little more than twenty years afterwards, a Home Secretary had the good sense to tell the Presbytery of Edinburgh that the spread of disease depended upon the observance of the laws of health; and that it was consequently a much wiser thing to cleanse themselves than to fast.[2] The undoubted truths which at a later date were thus enforced from the pulpit and the Home Office would not have commanded general acceptance in 1831. A large part of the nation concluded that the political troubles in which the country was involved, and the pestilence which was approaching its shores, were attributable to the direct interference of an offended Deity. The apprehensions which were everywhere prevalent gained possession of men's minds, and favoured the growth of a new superstition. For some years previously, a Scotch clergyman—Edward Irving—had been attracting large congregations in London. His admirers had built him a new church in Regent Square; and the opinions which he published, and which he promulgated from the pulpit, had drawn down upon him the wrath of the London Presbytery. The persecution of the Presbytery only increased the extravagance of Irving. On the

The superstitions of the populace.

Irving.

[1] Greville, vol. ii. pp. 210, 259. [2] Buckle's *Civilization*, vol. iii. p. 476.

second Sunday of October 1831 he preached, both in the morning and in the evening, on the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. In the morning, a lady who was forced to retire into the vestry, was seized with an uncontrollable desire to speak in 'the unknown tongue.' In the evening a gentleman, who was permitted to remain in the church, delivered an address in the unknown tongue. On the following Sunday, Irving again referred to the matter in his pulpit, and declared that the persons speaking in the unknown tongues were commissioned to announce the immediate coming of the Lord. The unknown tongues had, at any rate, the effect of filling Irving's church. Crowded, excited, and occasionally riotous congregations attended every Sunday, to listen to Irving's full-toned eloquence, and to hear the unintelligible warnings of the unknown tongue.[1]

The extraordinary delusion which affected some of Irving's followers was entertained by men in high positions in Parliament. The House of Commons was invited to believe that the curse of God was on the land, and that nothing but humiliation and fasting could avert the pestilence.[2] The Ministry itself was compelled to defer to the pressure which the superstitions of the multitude brought to bear upon it; and, after appointing a special form of prayer in the beginning of November 1831, to set apart a day in March 1832 for humiliation and fasting.[3] A great many people seriously thought that fasting and humiliation were the only means by which the plague could be arrested, and that there was presumption in even speculating about the origin of a disease which was obviously sent by the Almighty.[4] Unluckily, the rules which the Privy Council adopted for preventing

A general fast appointed.

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 187; and cf. Greville, vol. iii. p. 41.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 895; vol. xi. p. 577.

[3] *Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., p. 181. Ibid., 1832, Chron., p. 40.

[4] See a remarkable letter in corresp. of Mrs. Grant, vol. iii pp. 216, 217, quoted by Buckle, vol. i. p. 128, note.

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the spread of sickness were so harsh that they made the remedies of man appear intolerable. The Privy Council contemplated the isolation of every house which was attacked by the cholera; and they ventured on hinting the possibility of drawing a military cordon around infected districts. Unhappily, moreover, the manner in which some of these regulations were carried out increased the animosity of the people. The mob believed that the bodies of the unfortunate persons who died of the plague, instead of receiving separate burial, were reserved for the dissecting-room. The rumour received some confirmation at Paisley, where many of the coffins of the so-called patients were discovered to be empty; and the people, furious at the discovery, attacked the hospital, broke the windows of the surgeons' houses, and committed other damage.[1] The suspicion which was thus cast on the remedies of the civil authorities necessarily strengthened the position of the superstitious few, who endeavoured to persuade the people that the plague could only be stayed by the direct intervention of the Deity. If it were once made obvious that human remedies were too harsh to be practicable, it was natural for a people frightened out of their senses to fold their hands, and, adhering to their filthy habits, throw themselves on the mercy of an omnipotent Deity.[2]

[1] *Ann. Reg.*, 1832, Chron., p. 44. Cf. Greville, vol. ii. p. 216.

[2] 'Body-snatching' was a crime held at that time in peculiar detestation by the lower orders. The medical profession were, not unreasonably, held responsible for it; and their open readiness to purchase 'subjects,' without any very careful inquiry as to their origin, justified in some degree the rage of the lower orders. It must be recollected that the horrible crimes for which Burke was executed in 1829, and which received a new name from the murderer, had been recently perpetrated. Peel had wisely endeavoured to prevent the repetition of such atrocities by providing the anatomists with a supply of subjects. (*Hansard*, vol. xx. p. 1003.) But the supply which was thus provided proved very insufficient. Only eleven bodies were legally available in 1831 for 800 students, who succeeded, notwithstanding the law, in obtaining 900 subjects. Subjects rose in price from 2*l.* to 10*l.* Body-snatching continued a profitable trade. Renewed attention was drawn to the matter by some horrible murders, of the same sort as Burke's, committed

The country had, perhaps, never been afflicted with so many troubles. Trade was stagnant, agriculture depressed, labour unemployed, capital idle. The working classes were organised for political purposes. The smouldering ruins at Bristol were visible witnesses of the passions which had provoked their organisation. A fatal disease was silently approaching the shores of Britain. Superstition, encouraged by disturbance and sickness, was threatening the land with the vengeance of its God. The horizon on all sides was overcast with clouds, and the gloom was not relieved by the slightest ray of hope. During the whole of the short Parliamentary recess men brooded over the prospects of the coming session. Parliament, which had been prorogued on the 20th of October, met again on the 6th of December. Six days afterwards, or on Monday, the 12th, Lord J. Russell introduced the third Reform Bill. The third Reform Bill was constructed on different principles from either of its predecessors. It was determined to disfranchise wholly fifty-six boroughs, returning 111 members; it was decided to deprive thirty other boroughs of half of their representatives. The boroughs which were marked for disfranchisement were selected on a new principle. Regard was paid to the population of the smaller towns, the number of houses in them, and the amount which they respectively paid in assessed taxes. From these various sources the list of the condemned boroughs was prepared. The change of method, however, made no material difference in Schedule A. One or two boroughs escaped disfranchisement; one or two others were added to the list; but Schedule A for all practical purposes was unaffected.

The third Reform Bill.

in London in November 1831.—*Ann. Reg.*, 1831, Chron., pp. 316–335; and cf. Greville, vol. ii. p. 227. A new bill was introduced on the subject in the session of 1831–2.—*Hansard*, Third Series, vol. ix. p. 578. It is not impossible that the Paisley Resurrectionists may have disinterred some of the bodies of the cholera patients. One of the old Resurrectionists is, or was very recently, still living in London.

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A material difference, however was made in Schedule B. In the first bill forty-six boroughs had been included in this schedule. In the second bill forty boroughs, which were subsequently increased to forty-one, were named in it. But in the third bill only thirty boroughs were selected for partial disfranchisement. The milder measure of disfranchisement was possible, because, in another respect, the Ministry had modified its original scheme. In the former bills it had contemplated a considerable reduction in the members of the House of Commons. In the bill of December it preserved the number of 658 members which had composed it since the Irish Union. This decision enabled the Cabinet not merely to save a few boroughs from disfranchisement, but also to enfranchise a greater number of thriving towns. The former process pacified the feelings of the Opposition; the latter undoubtedly increased the efficiency of the measure.[1]

The bill which was thus introduced was at once read a first time. It passed its second reading after two nights' debate on the Friday following by a majority of exactly two to one.[2] The House, having made this satisfactory progress with the measure, adjourned for the Christmas holidays till the 17th of January. After the recess twenty-two nights' work enabled the Government to carry the bill through committee. On the 22nd of March it was read a third time;[3] and finally, on the 23rd of March, it passed the House of Commons without a division.[4]

It passes the House of Commons.

One branch of the Legislature had given a convincing proof of its desire for Reform. But no one had ever questioned the fidelity of the House of Commons to the cause of the people. The second Reform Bill had been lost through the action of the Peers, and there was no

[1] For Lord John Russell's speech, see *Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 156. Cf. also *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 87.

[2] 324 votes to 162 (*Hansard*, vol. ix. p. 546).

[3] By 355 votes to 239 (ibid., vol. xi. p. 780).

[4] Ibid., p. 857.

reason to suppose that the Peers had modified their views on the subject. There was, however, one way by which the House of Lords could be controlled. The king had the undoubted right to create any number of Peers; and a majority could, of course, be converted into a minority by the process. In the beginning of September 1831 Brougham had desired to adopt this remedy.[1] His advice had been supported by Durham[2] and Graham,[3] who had persistently urged it on their colleagues. The king, however, had the strongest possible objection to the suggestion.[4] Grey was himself opposed to it;[5] and Althorp shared Grey's objections to any large creation[6] of Peers. The reluctance of Grey and Althorp to swamp the Peerage by a considerable addition to its numbers induced the moderate members of the Cabinet to try to effect a compromise with a portion of the Opposition. There were two sections of the Opposition who, for different reasons, seemed capable of conversion. In the first place, the Bishops had, almost without exception, voted against the former bill; and the king thought that his influence might induce them to modify their views. In the next place, a few Tory Peers, of whom Lord Harrowby and Lord Wharncliffe were the most prominent, were profoundly impressed with the dangers inseparable from the unconditional rejection of the bill, and sincerely anxious to conclude a compromise upon it. The negotiations, which were attempted with these objects, were not, however, successful. The king failed to extract a promise of support from the Bishops; and the demands of the Waverers, as the moderate Peers were termed, proved inadmissible.[7]

The Bishops and the Waverers.

[1] Brougham's *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 125.
[2] Spencer, p. 369.
[3] Ibid., p. 370.
[4] Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. i. p. 363.
[5] Ibid., p. 366.
[6] Spencer, p. 371.
[7] These negotiations are detailed in the corresp. of Earl Grey with William IV., vol. i. p. 437; and appendix B, p. 464. See also vol. ii. pp. 2–21, and pp. 38, 56. Greville, vol. ii. p. 211, gives a detailed account of the negotiation.

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These failures naturally strengthened the hands of the small party in the Cabinet who desired to secure the success of the bill by an unlimited creation of Peers. Grey's firm refusal to yield to their wishes led to a violent attack upon him by Durham, his own son-in-law. Durham's language was so 'brutal'[1] that his colleagues expected his immediate resignation, and the possible dissolution of the Government. The great Reform Cabinet seemed likely to be dissolved by the quarrel of Lord Grey and his son-in-law.

Durham's brutal attack had not, however, removed the chief difficulty. Brougham declared that the failure of the Ministry to make Peers was interpreted by their opponents to mean that the king declined to create them; and he suggested that this belief should be removed by twelve or fifteen creations, and by the promise of the king to sanction further creations if they were necessary.[2] The Cabinet assented. The king was induced to give a reluctant consent, on the condition that the new Peerages should be conferred, with few exceptions, on the heirs of existing Peers;[3] and he was ultimately prevailed upon to withdraw his stipulation that the new creations should not exceed twenty-one in number. Rumours of this arrangement were soon heard. The Waverers, in consequence of them, showed an increasing disposition to arrange terms with the Government. Lord Harrowby and Lord Wharncliffe again distinguished themselves by the moderation of their views, and by their desire to conclude some compromise acceptable to all parties. Greville, whose position at the Council Office had secured him the friendship of all parties, exerted himself to mediate between them. An arrangement was at last concluded by which a majority for the second reading of the bill

The king assents to the creation of Peers.

[1] Lord Althorp's expression (Spencer, p. 375). Cf. Greville, vol. ii. p. 226, where Melbourne is reported to have said, 'If I had been Lord Grey I would have knocked him down.'

[2] Brougham, vol. iii. p. 151.

[3] Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. ii. pp. 77, 128.

was secured, on condition that no new Peerages should be created. Lord Harrowby and Lord Wharncliffe were able to assure Lord Grey that a sufficient number of votes could be obtained for the second reading of the bill on this understanding.[1]

The bill was introduced in the House of Lords on the 26th of March. The Waverers publicly avowed their intention of supporting it. Wellington formally declared that his own opinions were unchanged; and the bill was read a first time, without a division.[2] The debate on the second reading, which commenced on the 9th of April, lasted over four nights. The sun had risen on the morning of the 14th when the Lords pronounced their decision on the principle of the measure. But the division list afforded a decisive proof of the change which had been effected in the views of the Peers. Seventeen Peers who had voted against the bill of 1831 voted for the bill of 1832. Ten who had voted against the bill of 1831 stayed away from the division in 1832; and twelve others who had been absent in 1831 supported the measure of 1832. These defections from the ranks of the Opposition decided the fate of the measure. The bill of 1831 had been lost by a majority of 41; the second reading of the bill of 1832 was carried by a majority of nine.[3]

The second reading of the Bill carried.

The news of the great division was everywhere received with satisfaction. Reform had evidently made considerable progress, and its ultimate success was becoming more assured. But the satisfaction with which the decision of the Lords was regarded was not shared by the Ministry. The majority by which the second reading of the bill had been carried was, therefore, only

[1] This negotiation is best related in Greville, vol. ii. pp. 237–263.

[2] *Hansard*, vol. xi. p. 870.

[3] An analysis of the division will be found in *Ann. Reg.*, 1832, Hist., p. 146. Three Peers, absent in 1831, voted against the bill of 1832.

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small, and no great reliance could be placed on the future votes of those who had composed it. The Ministry, in short, could have no chance of carrying the measure in its further stages without creating new Peers; and the Peerage question presented unexpected difficulties. The king's feelings respecting the Reform Bill had gradually undergone a remarkable change. In the beginning of 1831 he had given a zealous support to his ministers; and his support was the support of a man who thoroughly understood the bill, and whose voice had been heard in the arrangement of its details. In March 1831 he had been reluctantly induced to face the possible risks of a dissolution and to appeal to the country. But the necessity for a dissolution moderated the king's ardour. His zeal cooled in exact proportion to the growing warmth of the country. He protested against the demonstrations with which the dissolution was received; he protested against the language used by Liberal newspapers; he dreaded the consequences of a prolonged struggle between the two Houses of Parliament; he objected to the decision of his ministers to adhere to the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill; and he over and over again urged upon them the desirability of compromise. The organisation of the country in Political Unions; the disturbances which followed the rejection of the second Reform Bill, and the Bristol riots, increased the genuine alarm which the king felt; while his fears were concurrently excited by the visible spread of revolution abroad, and by the disposition which, he fancied, was displayed by his Government to unite with France in support of Liberal principles.[1] He hailed the second

The king's growing dislike of the Reform Bill.

[1] The king's gradual coolness on Reform may be traced in his correspondence with Lord Grey, vol. i. pp. 96, 158, 219-243, 248, 380, 394. The foreign policy of Lord Grey's Government cannot be dealt with in this volume. The king's fears respecting it were so strong that he actually desired that no instruction should be sent to his Ministers abroad which 'has not obtained his previous concurrence.'—*Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 355. This order induced Lord Grey to tender his resignation, if

reading of the Reform Bill with satisfaction, because it relieved him from the necessity of immediately redeeming his pledge to sanction the creation of an unlimited number of Peers. While nominally continuing to repose unabated confidence in his advisers, his manner towards them underwent so remarkable an alteration that it led to their formal remonstrance; and the Tory papers were induced to declare that the king was pledged to nothing beyond the second reading of the bill, and that he was entirely indifferent as to any alteration which might be made in it in committee.[1]

The disfranchisement clause postponed.

These reports, industriously circulated in every quarter, naturally increased the embarrassment of the Ministry. Parliament, which had separated for the Easter recess, did not reassemble till the 7th of May. On that evening Lyndhurst moved the postponement of the clause disfranchising the boroughs enumerated in Schedule A. The motion was carried against the Government by 151 votes to 116; and Grey at once postponed the further consideration of the measure. The Cabinet met on the morning of the 8th, and decided on 'the expediency of advancing to the honour of the Peerage such a number of persons as might ensure the success of the bill in all its essential principles.' The king was verbally assured by Grey and Brougham, who were charged with the duty of laying the decision of the Cabinet before him, that at least fifty fresh Peerages would be required.[2] The king,

the king's confidence were withdrawn?—*Ibid.*, p. 365. The king's letter was written within sixty hours of the passage of the second reading of the Reform Bill in the House of Lords, and the Grey Ministry was nearly wrecked on a side-issue.

[1] Ibid., p. 374.

[2] Corresp. of Earl Grey with William IV., vol. ii. pp. 395, 415. Greville, who was evidently informed of everything that took place, says that they recommended fifty new Peers (vol. ii. p. 294). Brougham (vol. iii. p. 193), who ought to have known, says sixty or eighty. Among outsiders a smaller number was supposed to be sufficient.

'What though now opposed I be?
Twenty Peers shall carry me.
If twenty won't, thirty will,
For I'm his Majesty's bouncing Bill,'

wrote Macaulay. See Lady Trevelyan's diary of March 15, 1832, in Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, vol. i. p. 191.

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after a day's consideration, declined to act on the advice of his Ministry, and accepted their resignations. On the same day he sent for Lord Lyndhurst, with a view to the formation of a new Administration.

The resignation of the Grey Ministry.

Lyndhurst was sitting in the Court of Exchequer when the king's commands for his attendance were brought to him. He found the king desirous of carrying a measure of Reform, but terrified at the extreme counsels of his Whig Ministry. Lyndhurst recommended him to form an Administration prepared to carry a moderate Reform Bill, and undertook himself to conduct a negotiation with this object. Charged with the king's commands, Lyndhurst at once applied to Wellington. Wellington was more opposed to Reform than any other statesman. But Wellington's political conduct was uniformly governed by two considerations. He always considered what was practicable; he always tried to ascertain what was due to his sovereign. It was no longer practicable, in 1832, to defend the uncompromising position which he had taken in 1830. Reform was necessary; and a mild dose, prescribed by the Tories, seemed preferable to the strong purge recommended by their opponents. Successful with Wellington, Lyndhurst turned to Peel.[1] But Peel scornfully rejected the notion that he should personally carry the measure which he had spent day and night for a year and a half in opposing. Peel's refusal, either to take the highest office or any office, was the first rebuff which Lyndhurst received. Peel's example was at once imitated by Goulburn and Croker; and these successive refusals made the formation of a Tory Government hopeless. Alexander Baring, indeed, the member for Callington, a gentleman of some experience in commercial pursuits, undertook to perform the duties of Chancellor of the Ex-

[1] Campbell says, inaccurately, that Lyndhurst applied to Peel first (*Chancellors*, vol. viii. p. 83). Greville gives the true version (vol. ii. p. 294).

chequer. Manners Sutton, the Speaker, promised to lead the House of Commons and to be Secretary of State.[1] Experienced politicians, blinded by their own prejudices, really imagined that a Government in a hopeless minority in the House of Commons—with no first-rate and even no second-rate men to defend it in that House—had a chance of moderating the passionate hurricane which was raging in the land.

The men, however, who reposed in a fancied security amidst the strife around them were soon subjected to a rude awakening. On the 9th of May, Grey and Althorp announced the resignation of the Whig Ministry. During a similar crisis in the previous autumn Ebrington had come forward and proposed a vote of confidence in the Administration. On the 10th of May, Ebrington again proposed an address to the Crown of confidence in the Government. The House, on the same evening, adopted the motion by a majority of 80.[2] This decision naturally increased the difficulties of the Tory gentlemen who were endeavouring to form a new Administration. They could no longer affect to be ignorant of the opposition of the House of Commons. But the decision of the House of Commons formed only one element of danger. On the same evening a petition was presented from the City of London praying the House to stop the supplies. On the 11th a similar petition was presented from Manchester. It was notorious that petitions with the same object were being prepared in every large town. Lord Milton openly admitted that he had desired the tax-gatherer to call again, as he might find it necessary to refuse payment. Men, in their passionate excitement, hastily concluded that a commercial crisis would be preferable to the fall of the Grey Ministry. A run upon the Bank of England, it

Ebrington's motion.

[1] Roebuck, vol. ii. p. 287. Cf., however, Greville, vol. ii. pp. 299, 300.

[2] 288 votes to 208. See *Hansard*, vol. xii. p. 864.

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was thought, might increase the difficulties of the situation and embarrass the Tory Government. 'Go for gold and stop the duke,' was the advice which was placarded on every bare wall in the metropolis.[1]

The recall of Lord Grey.

Every moment was increasing the difficulties of the duke. On Monday, the 14th of May, his difficulties became insuperable. A petition was presented to the House of Commons praying that the supplies might be refused till the Reform Bill had become law. A violent debate ensued. The duke's inconsistency in accepting office was criticised by Duncombe on one side of the House, and by Inglis on the other. Every thrust was received with cheers and counter-cheers; and the House, overcrowded with numbers, and in a state of uncontrolled excitement, presented a scene of unparalleled violence. Baring spoke again and again, but proved unequal to the task of moderating the assembly. Appalled at the tempest which they had provoked, Sutton and Baring repaired to Wellington to tell him that their situation was impracticable. On the following morning the duke waited on the king and advised the recall of Lord Grey.[2]

The king had no alternative but to adopt the advice which the duke thus gave him. But he still shrank from the expedient, which the Whig Ministry had pressed on him, of an unlimited creation of Peers. He suggested to Grey that his old ministers might return to office; that some modifications might be made in the bill, and that the measure might then be passed with the assistance of the Tory party. Grey replied that the events which had taken place had made modifications much more difficult, and that the Ministry could not resume office 'except with a sufficient security that they will possess the power of passing the present bill unimpaired in its principles and its essential provisions, and as nearly as possible in

[1] Roebuck, vol. ii. p. 292.

[2] Greville, vol. ii. p. 299. Spencer, p. 432. Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 105.

its present form.'[1] This security, the Ministry decided, could only be obtained in two ways. The adversaries of the bill might cease from opposing it, or their opposition might be overcome. The former alternative appeared impracticable; the latter obviously pointed to a large creation of Peers. The king, still clinging to the hope that an addition to the Peerage might be avoided, instructed his secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, to inform the Duke of Wellington that all difficulties would be removed by 'a declaration in the House of Lords from a sufficient number of Peers that they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill.'[2] Wellington, as usual, obeyed the king's commands. He withdrew from the House; and he was accompanied, in withdrawing from it, by Lyndhurst and other Peers. But the seceders prefaced their withdrawal by speeches of extreme violence, and tacitly reserved to themselves the liberty of returning and of resuming their opposition to the bill. This conduct increased the embarrassments of the Ministry. The Cabinet, meeting the next day, decided that their continuance in office must depend on their receiving 'full and indisputable security' 'for insuring the speedy settlement of the Reform Bill.' The king, finding that he had no alternative but submission, gave the requisite authority. The Cabinet were empowered, if it should be necessary to do so, to create an unlimited number of Peers, provided that they, in the first instance, called to the House of Lords the eldest sons of Peers or the collateral heirs of childless noblemen.[3]

The Reform Bill carried.

The Ministry had, at last, obtained the full authority which they required. But they fortunately discovered that it was unnecessary for them to avail themselves of

[1] Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. ii. pp. 406, 410.

[2] Ibid., p. 420.

[3] Corresp. of Earl Grey and William IV., vol. ii. pp. 424, 435. Cf. Brougham, vol. iii. p. 199; and Greville, vol. ii. p. 303.

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it. The king's letter had done its work. Wellington and other Peers, obeying his Majesty's hint, abstained from taking any further part in the discussions on the Reform Bill. The Opposition was, of course, paralysed by the abstention of its leaders. The measure, freed from any serious attack upon it, made rapid progress. It passed through committee at the end of May; it was read a third time on the 4th of June. The House of Commons immediately afterwards assented to the slight amendments which had been introduced in the Lords; and on the 7th of June the Royal assent to the measure was given by commission.

The controversy had been thus concluded; the victory had thus been won. The people and the House of Commons had triumphed over the scruples of the king and the opposition of the Peerage. The old electoral system, founded on monopoly and corruption, had been destroyed; and a new system, erected on the broad foundations of popular support, had been substituted for it. Though, however, the abuses of the old rule had been terminated, the expediency of the new rule was still unproved. The men who had demanded Parliamentary Reform had desired it as a means to an end. The means had been obtained: the end had still to be secured. The harvest was ripe for the sickle. But the thick clouds which still obscured the political horizon, at home and abroad, dismayed the boldest politicians. Risings in France; revolutions in Poland; civil war in Portugal; Austrian and French interference in Italy and Spain; disputes, threatening European complications in the Netherlands; rebellion, threatening the disruption of the Ottoman Empire in the East—these and other things were concurrently menacing the peace of the world. Disturbances in Ireland; riots in the provinces; the organisation of the working classes; a stagnant trade; an inelastic revenue; an overstocked labour market; a pauperised population

—these were the causes which were portending trouble at home. The cholera was striking down its helpless victims in every village; fanatical preachers were exciting the superstitious feelings of a frightened people; political agitators were bestirring them to action; the king had lost his popularity from his faint-hearted support of his Ministry; the old ruling classes were regarded with detestation for opposing the wishes of the people; numbers were arrayed against property; property was distrustful of numbers; the old machinery of Government had been abolished; a new machinery, which no one had ever tried, had been substituted for it; and men gloomily asked each other where the Revolution, which had already begun, was to end.

The end was already approaching. King and Queen sat sullenly apart in their palace. Peer and country gentleman moodily awaited the ruin of their country and the destruction of their property. Fanaticism still raved at the wickedness of a people; the people, clamouring for work, still succumbed before the mysterious disease which was continually claiming more and more victims. But the nation cared not for the sullenness of the court, the forebodings of the landed classes, the ravings of the pulpit, or even the mysterious operations of a new plague. The deep gloom, which had overshadowed the land, had been relieved by one single ray. The victory had been won. The Bill had become law.

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